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EDWARD BULWER, LORD LYTTON

VOL. II.

Yours very affectionately

E. Lytton Bulwer

Anno ætatis. 25.

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & Co

EDWARD

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THE LIFE

LETTERS AND LITERARY REMAINS

OF

EDWARD BULWER, LORD LYTTON

BY

HIS SON

WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

VOL. II.

LONDON
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SINGLE LIFE

1825—1826

BAYERISCHE
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CHAPTER I.

PROSPECT AND RETROSPECT. 1825. ÆT. 22.

My father's Autobiography comes to an end in the middle of a lively period, and on the threshold of a serious epoch, in his life. In the last chapter of it we have seen him, at the age of twenty-two, just entering into the world with high aspirations, and an ardent ambition not yet directed to any fixed purpose. Already the desire of personal distinction was associated with the idea of public usefulness; but its aims were still indefinite, and its course uncertain.

His capabilities both of pleasure and of pain were exceptionally large; and whatever he did or felt, was felt and done strongly. The airs of indifference and frivolity assumed by him in his Pelham days were not merely literary artifices; they were partly the devices of a shy nature to protect from unsympathetic notice its own sensitive intensity. The real man was passionately earnest. He had a temperament naturally joyous and buoyant: but its natural buoyancy had been considerably subdued by an early sorrow so acutely felt that the traces of it were never wholly effaced. That premature experience had, no doubt, deepened his character in many directions; but it had also given to his disposition at this time a morbid, and even a dangerous, inclination. It subjected him to frequent fits of great melancholy and dejection. In natures as active as his there is always a healthy tendency to enjoyment; and these melancholy moods were followed by impatient cravings for excitement. The

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nature was a rich one—a fertile and tenacious soil wherein any seed, whether of good or evil, was certain to strike strong root and bear fruit abundantly. But the quality of the harvest to be reaped from it depended much on the character of its cultivation during the next few years. His observant schoolmaster had noted, with misgiving, in his character as a boy the latent dangers of this exuberant vitality. 'He is,' said Dr. Hooker, 'capable of extraordinary exertion, and also of self-denial, for any object in which he is interested; but, without such an object, his high spirits, his eagerness for pleasure, and keen enjoyment of it, may prove the ruin of his character.'

The 'high spirits' had been greatly sobered; but the 'eagerness for pleasure' was to some extent inseparable from the 'capability of extraordinary exertion,' and other permanent qualities of his nature. He had now the means of amply indulging it. The allowance made to him by his mother was a large one; and, with all his love of pleasure, his tastes were not extravagant. He was in the heyday of his youth. No professional or family obligations restricted its unfettered freedom; no anxieties for himself or others overshadowed its boundless horizon. Two years later he had exchanged deliberately all these advantages for the responsibilities of matrimony under conditions exceptionally trying, and with no other sources of income than genius and labour.

There is a time of life when even sadness is a kind of happiness; a time when the atmosphere of sentiment is finer than it can ever be again, and the sorrows that gather and disperse in that atmosphere are like the ethereal showers sometimes seen, in the fervid skies of Mexico, hovering over the earth but never reaching it. Grief, however passionate, when it comes to us for the first time, has at least the compensating charm of its 'raven gloss' still fresh upon it. The griefs of later years are less vehement, but they are more oppressive. Thus, all early feelings, even disappointed hopes and frustrated affections, are more beautiful than later ones in the retrospect

of those who have felt them. And this, perhaps, is one of many reasons why men, as they approach the age when to look back is more natural than to look forward, instinctively recall the most trivial impressions of their youth, or childhood, with greater pleasure than the most important achievements of their middle life.

In my father's account of his school and college days, even those passages which describe his sorrowings for the loss of his first love were probably written with something of the wistful pleasure common to such recollections. But he may well have shrunk and hesitated as he approached in memory a time which was the beginning of lifelong calamities grimly prosaic, softened by no mitigating touches of romance, and productive only of the most poignant and enduring mortification. Here, at any rate, he threw aside the record of his reminiscences. Not but that he meant to continue it. Time after time, he took it up again with that object. Time after time, again he put it down untouched. And so years passed away, adding much to the experiences of his life, but nothing to his written account of them.

The resumption of the Autobiography was prevented, however, by lack of leisure and opportunity even more than by lack of inclination. When an author begins to collect his works it is usually a sign that he meditates no important addition to the number of them; that he is contemplating an early retirement from his accustomed field of literary labour; and that he feels the day has come when his permanent position as a writer must rest rather on his past achievements than on his future exertions. In the case of imaginative writings which have powerfully affected for any length of time the imagination of their readers, the author and the public are almost always contemporaries. They have been young together, and together they grow old. By degrees they simultaneously exhaust the associations they had in common. A new race arises, with different experiences and sympathies, to

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which new writers furnish different forms of expression. The voices grow fewer and fainter that exclaimed to the author at the outset of his way

Ibimus, ibimus
Utcunque præcedes, supremum
Carpere iter comites parati.

The old readers drop out of the *turba remi*, and the old writers rest silent on their oars.

It was under an impression that his literary life had reached some such period of rest and retrospection that my father began the memoirs which were to preserve the history of it. He at that time contemplated, if not a permanent retirement from the profession of authorship, at least a prolonged relaxation of its activity. His health, always fragile, had suffered much from mental exertion, and yet more from the wear and tear and worry of vexations which wrung to the roots the most sensitive fibres of his nature. The duration of his life (at least in the undiminished vigour of all its faculties) appeared to him extremely uncertain. In this mood his mind naturally reverted to the past, associating the recollections of it with thoughts of that distant future from which genius, consciously or unconsciously, awaits the final verdict on its work.

The retrospect thus taken must have 'revived to fancy's view' many things which, though unshown by the visible results of work actually accomplished, were associated with it in the recollections of its author: intellectual conceptions not embodied in such work, personal experiences and feelings imperfectly expressed by it, which had nevertheless combined their influence to shape its character or fix its aim. For, in all probability, no creative writer of true genius has ever given out the whole of what is in him. Every great author is greater than his greatest book; and in the life he has lived (not outwardly but inwardly) there should be something which, could we read it aright, would be better worth reading than all he has written. Although the records of this inner life

are in a language more or less untranslateable, my father believed that a personal account of what was apparent to himself when he looked into the book of his mind might hereafter be read with interest as a transcript of the original text closer at least than the imaginative forms in which some portion of it had already been embodied. And so his memoirs were begun.

But the lasting farewells, so often taken of the public by writers to whom authorship has become an habitual occupation, resemble the vows of eternal fidelity addressed by lovers to each other. Fate and the future are in a conspiracy to defeat their fulfilment. In this case, there was certainly no foundation for the author's impression that the relations between the public and himself had reached that stage of reciprocal indifference to which an amicable separation offers the best prospect of mutual satisfaction. Their intercourse, soon afterwards renewed, was maintained with zest and increasing intimacy to the last hour of his life. He never got, as the phrase goes, to the bottom of his ink-bottle; never survived either the force and freshness of his imaginative power, or the public interest in repeated manifestations of its inexhaustible fecundity. And thus it happened that not only the most noticeable period of his political career, but also the most popular productions of his literary genius, were subsequent to the meditated close of his active connection with politics and literature.

The continuation of the Autobiography was consequently postponed in favour of more immediate demands; and the narrative it leaves unfinished is here continued from the biographical materials found in his correspondence, his private notes of reading, reflection, and observation, and sundry sketches or fragments of original compositions which serve to exemplify, better perhaps than any finished work, both his way of working and his way of thinking and feeling, at different periods of his life.

CHAPTER II.

INFLUENCE OF THE ABBÉ KINSELA. 1825. ÆT. 22.

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1825-26

My father often told me that, although he never succeeded in keeping a journal, he had, at different periods of his life, begun to note down the daily employment of his time, with the intention of persevering in that practice.

Two years ago, when looking over some tattered and discarded tapestries, stowed away with other household rubbish in a loft at Knebworth, I found there an old leathern travelling-bag, much mildewed, and stuffed with torn papers, mostly college accounts and business letters. Among them was the fragment of a diary which probably represents the earliest of those unfruitful resolutions, for it is a rather bald record, in my father's handwriting, of what was seen and done by him during the first weeks of his visit to Paris in 1825. Some few of the entries in it may, I think, be shortly noticed here, because they show, incidentally, the direction given to his mind by the influence of the Abbé Kinsela, and also the general character of the things then engaging his attention.

The first pages of the diary record a visit to 'The Manufactory of Looking-glass,' and carefully describe the process of that manufacture. The next are devoted to a description of 'The National Reserve of Corn and Flour for Periods of Distress.' Then comes mention of a visit paid to 'the building in which all wine that enters France must be deposited: the dealers, who have small stalls in it, paying only as they withdraw the wine. *Vin Ordinaire de Bordeaux*, forty-two

francs the barrel, about three sous a bottle. What an immense profit for the tavern-keepers!' A little later, he has 'visited the gigantic model of the elephant intended to be in bronze, where the Bastille stood. A fountain. Grand, stupendous, wonderful. Doubt and discussion as to the grace of its design and harmony with the purpose of the image, chiefly humbug. What is grand is grand.' This is followed by a visit to the church of Ste. Geneviève, and afterwards to the *Hospice des Enfants Trouvés*. The reflections suggested by the last are curious. A very few years later, my father's note-book contained the following entry:—'What can *seem* a more excellent institution than *Les Enfants Trouvés*? It would prevent infanticide by offering a home to deserted infants. Yet what are the facts? Since the propagation of these institutions, the number of foundlings has prodigiously increased, while the frequency of infanticide has not diminished.' And then follows a formidable array of facts collected from the statistics of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland, and Germany. But on this occasion he only sees in the *Hospice des Enfants Trouvés* a 'most beautiful undertaking. Child brought in by its parents. No question asked. Invariably received. Kept there for a few days, and then sent to the country. Subsequently many of them return to Paris for education, or are put to different trades.'

And here he adds a warm tribute of respect to the French *Religieuses*. It was doubtless well merited, for the calumniators of the conventual orders in France are not those who best know what lives their members lead.

Noticed the great attention of the Nuns. Greatly affected by their supernatural devotion to purposes so truly beneficent. Vague and vain accusation of want of utility, commonly made against the *Religieuses*. All I have yet seen are the most useful class of citizens. Am informed, and credibly, that no monastery is suffered to exist without exercising some pursuit useful to the interests of society. N.B. Will certify myself on that point.

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The next day he visits the School for the Education of the *Enfants Trouvés*.

Alas, how different! *There* all was cleanliness, propriety, exertion on the part of the directors. *Here* all is misery, filth, idleness. Remissness in the masters; lamentable failure in the object. Noted the sensible and true conclusion of Kinsela, that those who are paid to do good work cannot do it with the zest and efficiency of persons who do it gratuitously from duty. Here, then, is the great and eternal use of the *Religieuses*.

This entry seems to have been followed by a suspension of the diary. For how long a time it is impossible to say, for the dates are not explicit; but apparently it was soon resumed, though not long continued. These are the entries in it:—

9*th*.[1]—Saw a Convent. Nothing particular. Nun promised to pray for us as heretics.

10*th*.—The Observatoire. Inferior to Greenwich.

11*th*.—Hospital for old women. Great cleanliness and comfort. Apparent cheerfulness of all. 5,000 inmates, so old, so infirm, and yet so lively! French gaiety on the brink of the grave.

12*th*.—Saw the Hospital for Veterans. [Here follows an account of its origin, description of its organisation, statement of qualifications for admission, &c.] Went to the Library. One veteran reading a book of devotion; another, *des aventures galantes*; a third, universal history. Characteristic of this people. Love, religion, and politics, all so fantastically mingled.

13*th*.—Saw an establishment for lighting by gas. Ingenious. Very promising. Immense benefit to all if it succeeds.

14*th*.—Porcelain manufactory at Sèvres. Paintings exquisite. A Madonna for 50 napoleons: a Cupid and Psyche for 25,000 francs. *Manières de voir* pecuniarily expressed. Colours remarkably fine, but not equal to the old.

15*th*.—Talked, with Kinsela, to a peasant, near Versailles, about religion. Sensible replies to questions on images and absolution. Inveterate ignorance in England about Catholic tenets.

16*th*.—Hospice for blind boys. Children taught music, Latin, mathematics. Last two scarcely seem useful; but probably many of the better classes resort here. Surprising geographical knowledge

[1] The month and year are not stated in the diary.

of a little girl I talked with. Boys, how pleasantly free from the *mauvaise honte* of English lads of the same age.

17*th.*—Went to a barn near Versailles, and studied manner of threshing. Different from ours. With the same hand, instead of changing.

18*th.*—Observed manner of praying in this country. More unostentatious and really devout than ours. Advantage of leaving the churches always open. Recollected the beautiful sentence in Hervey's 'Meditations,' applicable to Catholic, but not (as he meant it) to Protestant churches: 'The doors of the Church, like the Religion it was intended to honour, were open to everyone who would enter.'

The things noticed in this little diary are not of the kind one would think likely to interest a very young man, fond of pleasure, full of romance, and tasting for the first time, with unsated relish, the varied social delights of the liveliest capital in Europe. It is a matter-of-fact record of visits paid to schools, hospitals, manufactories, and public institutions. But there was in my father's temperament a happy natural diffusion of spirits which enabled him without effort to keep the practical and poetical tendencies of his mind on tolerably good terms with each other. Moreover, he had at all times a fortunate inquisitiveness about external things, and a lively enjoyment in the observation of them, which acted on his mind like out-of-door exercise on a man who has much occupation at home, and served to keep it healthily active. But for this gift, he might now have suffered much both intellectually and morally from that more or less morbid disposition to self-contemplation which is generally strong in youth, and was at this time particularly strong in him.

The Abbé's influence upon him, which finds indirect illustration in this diary, was probably aided by the attractions of the young lady of the Faubourg, mentioned in his Autobiography; and it is, I think, apparent from the tone of the diary that, although the Abbé 'did not pretend to convert' him, he had succeeded in giving to the mind of the young Englishman in whose fortunes he took such friendly interest

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a vague unconscious inclination towards that point of view whence 'all roads lead to Rome.'

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It would be premature to enter here upon any lengthened description of my father's thoughts and feelings about religion. But although the negative side of them was, naturally, most active in youth (the common season of doubt and inquiry), while their positive side was more strongly pronounced in age, I do not think they underwent appreciable change at any period of his life. It will not, therefore, be inappropriate if I at once take the opportunity to trace shortly the early influences which helped to form his religious sentiments, and indicate the habitual attitude of his mind towards the common doctrines, and chief divisions, of Christendom.

He was born in the Georgian age. That was an age of peace for the English Church. Anglican Theology slept the sleep of the just, and her dreams were untroubled. Within her own citadel there were no mutineers, and her external opponents were not formidable. Tom Paine and wooden shoes had gone out of fashion. The Voltairian philosophy, impartially intolerant of all religious organisations, concentrated no attack upon this or that particular form of Christian faith. Its founders had not bequeathed their wit to its disciples. In England it had made few converts. In France the reaction against it had begun. The little civil war between Orthodoxy and Nonconformity was virtually over: and, if the *modus vivendi* between the Church and the Tabernacle was not absolutely perfect, its disturbing elements were of a social and political, rather than of a doctrinal, character. Churchman and Dissenter, whatever their domestic differences, had at least a common cause to maintain against Popery on the one hand and Infidelity on the other.

Among the religious teachers of that time, the preponderance of genius, eloquence, and energy was towards Nonconformity. Thomas Chalmers, whose influence eventually led to the disruption of the Scotch Church in 1843, and who

is said to have been the most powerful preacher of his day, was then lecturing upon moral philosophy in the University of St. Andrew's. Robert Hall had just returned, in his fifty-seventh year, to the scene of his first ministrations in Bristol, at the Baptist church of Broadmead.

The orthodox Anglican divinity of the time was more distinguished by elegant scholarship, and (in the main) liberality and good sense, than by spiritual aspiration. Its intellectual attitude was unemotional, its pulpit oratory languid. Paley, its chief literary ornament, had died in 1805, bequeathing to it a complete doctrine of utilitarian morality. The lectures of Porteus and the sermons of Blair still provided for the orthodox flock its Sunday feasts of spiritual food; and on this not very stimulating pasturage the sheep browsed without any great temptation to wander away from it. Tractarianism, Puseyism, Ritualism, were watchwords as yet unknown within the calm enclosure of the Church. The future seemed promised to the movement which eventually provoked these reactions; and it was in the direction of what they called 'Evangelical Christianity' that men like Mackintosh, Wilberforce, and Stephen were looking for a regeneration of the spiritual life of their time.

The advanced guard of this Evangelical Christianity was headed by a little body of men (all earnest, and some eminent) who were known as the Clapham Sect. 'God,' said Wilberforce, 'has set before me the reformation of my country's manners.' But from the society whose manners they aspired to reform these advanced Christians held aloof. And from the society they formed amongst themselves they excluded all the charms, and graces, and innocent recreations which render social life endurable. In a day when the stage was adorned by the genius of the elder Kean, the Kembles, and Miss O'Neill, they denounced the playhouse as the house of sin. The novel was converted by Hannah More into the most vapid and tedious of homilies; and even the

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language of daily life was elaborately vulgarised by a sectarian phraseology employed with the worst possible taste. 'They have invented,' said Mackintosh, 'a new language, in which they never say that A. B. is good or virtuous, or even religious, but that he is an advanced Christian.'

It was natural, and indeed inevitable, that a young man of my father's temperament and tastes should view with extreme repugnance the pretensions of these high-sniffing religious formalists. They shocked, not his taste only, but also his strong love of intellectual, social, and political freedom. The prosecutions of Hone and Carlile for blasphemy had occurred, the first during his childhood, and the last during his boyhood. The three trials of Hone, who in each defended himself with great ability and success, were of a peculiarly sensational character. The trial of Carlile had been urged on by Wilberforce; the sentence was shockingly severe, and the defendant completely ruined by it. These trials appear to have made a deep impression on my father's feelings at a time when generous emotions are strongest. They filled him with a burning sense of their injustice; and his early letters and note-books contain several indignant allusions to them.

He had no more sympathy than Carlile's persecutors with the opinions for which that unfortunate man was so harshly punished; but he had a lively sympathy with every case of conscientious independence, with the general cause of intellectual liberty, and with the humane spirit of Christianity. All these appeared to him incompatible with the arrogant and despotic attitude of evangelical zeal. 'God forbid,' he wrote in one of his earliest note-books, 'that in my own country I should ever see even the most erroneous faith in His existence and providence replaced by the flimsy philanthropies of an atheistical philosophy, which can perceive in the universe nothing higher or more admirable than incessant relays of human beings without souls, hurrying after each other, across a foolish world, into a nothingness from which it supposes them to have

emerged, only to find out, as they go by, how to make houses instead of huts, and substitute swords and guns for wooden clubs. But I do, from my very heart, despise the cant which thrusts out of the pale of society a man whose only fault is that of not believing everything which it is his interest to believe; and I do feel the most sovereign contempt for a policy which attempts to protect popular opinion by the fine and imprisonment of unpopular theorists.'

By taste and temperament, by training and family tradition, and by the force of political as well as religious instinct, he was attached to the Established Church. He regarded it as a great bulwark against religious tyranny on the one hand, and religious anarchy on the other. He valued it also as a vehicle for the salutary association of religious teaching with intellectual refinement and learning. He appreciated the generally tolerant spirit of its divines. He knew by his own experience of country life how much good is done unostentatiously among the rural poor by the humblest of its ministers—good of a kind not performable by uneducated persons, however zealous and however pious. Attaching, as he did at all times, great political importance to the maintenance of kindly relations between rich and poor, he believed that such relations are better promoted by the influence of an educated rural clergy than by the order of men who exercise the function of dissenting ministers in the lower ranks of Nonconformity.

'I respect,' he wrote in 1826, 'the authority of the Established Church, because I sincerely believe it to be the religious organisation best adapted for the preservation of virtue and happiness among us.' And in one of his note-books bearing the same date I find the following reflection :—"It is surely strange that, although everyone exclaims against the wickedness of the age, yet no sooner does anyone affect peculiar piety than he becomes the subject of universal and vehement reprobation. What is the reason? I think it must be this. The world is a world of mediocrity; and therefore it does not

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readily pardon anything which appears either below or above the standard level. It is not a very bad world: therefore it dislikes what it conceives to be very bad. It is not a very good world: wherefore it does not approve what pretends to be very good. Neither is it, in all respects, a very wise world: and now and then its ideas about these two extremes are rather wrong. But the world has, in the main, a right instinct as to what is best for the preservation of its own comfort. And a very uncomfortable world it would be, if its reforming saints and sceptics had it all their own way. Winnow the chaff of its prejudices, and you will find at bottom the sound grain of a just opinion.'

He was not, however, likely to find in the rather somnolent religious literature of the undisturbed orthodoxy of those Georgian days much sustenance for spiritual cravings stimulated by the intellectual curiosity of a passionately imaginative and earnest nature. That curiosity attracted him to metaphysics and moral philosophy. His literary taste was delighted by the wit and knowledge of the world which he found in such writers as Helvetius, Diderot, and Voltaire. But their philosophy was entirely uncongenial to the constitution of his mind. To him the universe, and man's place in it, were full of a divine significance; and the French philosophy of the eighteenth century appeared to him shallow and ineffectual, not only as an interpretation of the mystery and miracle of existence, but even as a guide to the organisation of society without reference to the religious sanctions excluded from its system of morals.

The simplicity of his common sense was impervious to the seductions of this philosophy. Had it not been weighed in the balance of experience, and found lamentably wanting? The countrymen of Voltaire, trusting to philosophers and philanthropists, had rejected the religion of Pascal, as a ridiculous and degrading superstition. They had put their faith in the 'human perfectibility' of Condorcet, as a rational

and elevating creed. But with what result? Never was scepticism more terribly punished for its credulity. Philosophy had conducted her votaries to the public worship of a courtesan; and Philanthropy had plunged them into the perpetration of cruelties and crimes which transcended the massacre of St. Bartholomew in the depth and duration of their atrocity. Although, therefore, the French writers he was now studying exercised a perceptible influence over the style of some of my father's early compositions, they had no effect upon the religious sentiments in which he had been trained by a woman of deep and simple piety, whose example gave to her precepts enduring impressions on the character of her son.

A story is told of a discussion between Fuseli and a young and enthusiastic materialist. 'You assert, then,' said the latter, 'that I have an immortal soul?' 'Sir,' replied Fuseli, 'I have asserted nothing of the kind. What I assert is that *I* have an immortal soul.' To a similar question my father might, and perhaps would, have made a similar reply. For his belief in the existence of a personal provident Deity, and a responsible indestructible human soul, was inherent to the constitution of his mind, and inseparable from the sense of his own vigorous personality.[1] From the twofold conviction thus interwoven with the facts of consciousness (a conviction which no reasoning was needed to confirm or able to disturb) flowed faith in the direct relations between man and God proclaimed by Christianity, and in the moral efficacy of prayer.

But his faith was neither solaced by ceremonial expression, nor fortified by dogmatic definition; and, finding the whole field of religious controversy strewn with the wrecks of internecine

[1] It might well be described in the words of La Bruyère:—'Je sens qu'il y a un Dieu, et je ne sens pas qu'il n'y en a point. Tout le raisonnement du monde m'est inutile. Cette conclusion est dans ma nature. J'en ai reçu les principes trop aisément dans mon enfance, et je les ai conservés depuis trop naturellement dans un âge plus avancé pour les soupçonner de fausseté.'—*Des Esprits forts*, 485.

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conflict upon points, not of fundamental difference, but imperfect and sometimes nearly complete agreement, he had no inclination to take sides with any combatant in such a field. Thus, the diversities of Christian theology and ritual presented themselves to his mind as the diversities of civilised government and law present themselves to the mind of the political observer: mainly in relation to the diverse conditions and requirements of the communities in which they are found. An unpuritanical Protestantism he regarded as the form of Christian faith most favourable to the maintenance of that sober political freedom on which he set great store. But this did not prevent him from appreciating those features in the character of the Roman Church which justify its Catholic title by the comprehensiveness of its ecclesiastical organisation, and the activity of a popular spirit so profound that in every Catholic country this Church, notwithstanding its despotic alliances, is emphatically the Church of the People.

His feelings on this point, however, will be best expressed by himself in the following extract from a letter to a Roman Catholic correspondent.

> Let me add the expression of my sincere concern, if, as you imply, there be anywhere in my writings passages that wound or offend you as a Catholic Christian. It is quite unconsciously, or quite in ignorance, if I fall into traps or pitfalls of religious controversy. I have neither the temperament nor the learning of a disputant in theology; and there is nothing in which I more differ from the philosophers of the last century than their attitude towards the ministry and priesthood of those divine truths in which Catholic and Protestant have a common stronghold to defend. I may also add that among the dearest friends I possess are two Catholics, in whom I recognise very pure and rare types of virtue. I know no men more severely moral in their own lives, or more mildly charitable to the infirmities of others. And, were it but for their sake, I should indeed be sorry if, in the range of works so various (and many of them so light), I had written anything that wounded the faith of earnest members of so vast a community of Christian brothers.

The sentiments expressed in this letter were perhaps a mental legacy bequeathed to my father by the excellent Kinsela. But upon the road to Rome the object of the Abbé's solicitude proceeded no further than Paris; where he soon found that best of all schools for a young man's social education, the friendship of an amiable and accomplished woman of the world who is older than himself.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. CUNNINGHAM. 1825. ÆT. 22.

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THE Faubourg St.-Germain was at this time the centre of a little world to which every capital in Europe contributed some agreeable social element. Charles X. had just succeeded to a throne apparently consolidated by the sagacity of Louis XVIII.; and the society gathered around it was national without being narrow, cosmopolitan without being promiscuous. At the head of that society was a *Noblesse* which had received from other countries, during the Emigration, a hospitality it was now able and eager to return. The best families of France recalled the privations of the Revolution with feelings which only stimulated the enjoyments of the Restoration; and in their *salons* the triple aristocracy of birth, talent, and beauty was brilliantly represented.

In this society was then living an English family to whose house my father had already become an habitual visitor. Some of the exiled Bourbon Princes had, during their sojourn in England, been the frequent guests of Sir John Call, a Cornish baronet warmly attached to their cause. This gentleman's daughter and her husband, Mr. Cunningham (who subsequently, on the death of his brother, became Sir Charles Cunningham-Fairlie), were among the first English visitors to Paris after the battle of Waterloo. There they were cordially received; and there they had fixed their residence when my father first became acquainted with them. The acquaintance soon ripened into a warm and durable

friendship, which has left upon one of his earliest works traces of its pleasant influence. A great part of 'Pelham, or the Adventures of a Gentleman,' was written about this time; and in that novel Pelham says of himself:—

I had mixed of late very little with the English. My mother's introductions had procured me the *entrée* of the best French houses, and to them, therefore, my evenings were usually devoted. Alas! that was a happy time, when my carriage used to await me at the door of the Rocher de Cancale, and then wheel me to a succession of visits, varying in their degree and nature as the whim prompted: now to the brilliant soirées of Madame de ——, or the *appartement au troisième* of some less celebrated daughter of dissipation and *écarté*; now to the literary conversaziones of the Duchesse de D——, or the Vicomte de ——, and then to the feverish excitement of the gambling-house. Passing from each with the appetite for amusement kept alive by variety; finding in none a disappointment, and in every one a welcome; full of the health which supports, and the youth which colours, all excess or excitement—I drained with an unsparing lip whatever enjoyment that enchanting metropolis could afford.

Slightly altered, this passage would be strictly autobiographical. For 'my mother's introductions' read 'Mrs. Cunningham's introductions;' for 'the Duchesse de D——.' read 'the Duchesse Descazes;' and for 'the Vicomte de ——' read 'the Vicomte d'Arlincourt.' Of Mrs. Cunningham herself 'Pelham' also contains a portrait:

But to return to Mrs. C——. She writes beautiful poetry almost impromptu, draws charming caricatures, possesses a laugh for whatever is ridiculous, but never loses a smile for what is good. Placed in very peculiar situations, she has passed through each with a grace and credit which are her best eulogium. If she possesses one quality higher than intellect, it is her kindness of heart.

But I shall venture to add to this portrait another, for which I am indebted to the daughter of the lady whose likeness it depicts.

Edward Bulwer (she writes) was constantly at our house, whenever he came to Paris, during the years 1825 and 1826. My mother

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was his most intimate friend and cherished companion. The difference of their ages gave freedom to their intercourse, which was rendered mutually attractive by the similarity of their tastes and pursuits. She understood him; which few then did. She was clever enough to appreciate his genius, while her high moral character put their friendship above the world's blame. She joined a most sensitive and kindly nature to a sprightly wit. Her amusing repartees delighted him; and her knowledge of the world was useful to him. He often, even whilst in Paris, wrote to her asking her opinion on the books he was reading, or the politics of the day. She introduced him to her friends, both English and foreign.

His recollection of those times has given colour and animation to the descriptions, in his later works, of the peculiarities of Parisian life, its charms and follies, its vanities and virtues. But those of his own early life at Paris are vividly described in 'Pelham.' He was at that time particularly sensitive to the praise or blame of the world. He adopted a style of dress and manner different to that of other people; and he liked to be noted for it. My mother often laughed at him for this vanity, and his 'beautiful curls' were a standing joke amongst his friends.

But to him prolonged dissipation was distasteful; and from this life of excitement he would often retire to Versailles; wandering there, for weeks, about the then deserted palace, still resplendent with remembrances of the *Grand Monarque*, or the solitudes of the *Trianon*, so full of sad memories of Marie Antoinette. I suppose he sought retirement to complete 'Pelham,' for it was published shortly afterwards. My mother received many letters from him while he was at Versailles; but he maintained a strict secrecy as to his work. On its appearance, he sent her a copy of it; saying he wished her to see he had not forgotten her, and how much he owed to her friendship and society.

No doubt, however, one motive for his frequent, often prolonged, and generally sudden, disappearances from the society of his friends, was his love of reading; which was, even then, remarkable. Much of his correspondence with my mother at that time related to the books he was studying; and contained his criticisms upon them, inviting hers in return. He also sent her, in almost every letter, verses which were never published. I remember his return from one of these solitary trips, upon my fifteenth birthday. He jestingly pretended that he had been consulting the stars about my future; and he handed me its horoscope

in a poem which he had signed 'Magus.' He took an interest in all our pleasures, like an elder brother. I don't know why we considered him so old and wise. I was not out: but sometimes my mother took me to dances at the houses of her intimate friends; and then he always danced with me—which I was very proud of.

In the last chapter of his Autobiography my father has referred to these solitary sojourns at Versailles, and has given his own account of the motives of them. How his mind was then occupied, and what was the general tone of it, may be partly gathered from his correspondence with Mrs. Cunningham; who, on those occasions, jestingly addressed him as 'my dear Childe Harold,' a title suggested by his fits of dejection, which had for their concomitant an aversion to general society. He wrote to her, just before leaving France:—

Versailles, Tuesday.

My dear Friend,—I send my servant to the 'great city,' charged with sundry and manifold commissions: not the least important of which is the delivery of this note to you. I am delighted with my abode. I took my horse at 12 o'clock yesterday, and rode about the forest till 5, rejoicing in the air and sun like an escaped bird; and filled with the most sovereign contempt for all encaged starlings, who have not the privilege of being as free and uncaressed as myself. With Rousseau's 'Julie,' a map of Europe, Mill's 'Political Economy,' and pen, ink, and paper, I assure you I do not regret your gaieties at Paris; nor feel the want of that female society which, with your usual charity, you accused me of going to enjoy. So much for myself. Going into the country, as it distracts us from the crowd in which we are lost, recalls our wandering feelings and thoughts into ourselves; and therefore it always makes us exceedingly egotistical. Tell me what you think, see, and do. And yet I suppose it is all exactly the same as you have thought, seen, and done, for the last year. Life in cities (see what airs of superiority the country gives us!) is always so terribly monotonous. 'The beef of to-day,' says Canning in one of his parodies, 'is succeeded by the mutton of to-morrow; and, from the soup to the cheese, all is sameness and satiety.' I called on Mrs. Bathurst before I left, but did not see her. For this I was sorry, because we did not part on our usual terms of cordiality. She has been too kind to me for

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coolness to arise between us without any endeavour on my part to remove it. I have therefore tendered my adieux in writing, since I could not do so in person. It is more than likely that I shall only return to Paris for a day or two. I may, indeed, have to return to England for a short time. In fact, none of my plans are yet decided. When they are, you shall hear. Adieu. Pray write to me soon.

This letter is undated, but it must have been written within a few days of his return to England.

Pelham, in the passage I have quoted from the novel, describes the life lived by its author during his first visit to Paris. 'I drained,' he says, 'with an unsparing lip, whatever enjoyment that enchanting metropolis could afford.' And amongst its enjoyments he counts 'the feverish excitement of the gambling-house.'

A circumstance, trivial in itself, but not perhaps unimportant in its effect upon my father's character and life, may be mentioned in connection with this bit of autobiographical fiction.

Early one morning he returned to his hotel from a gambling-house in which he had been passing the last hours of the night. For the first time in his life he had played high: and, with the insidious good fortune so frequently attendant on the first steps along what would otherwise be the shortest and least attractive pathway to perdition, he had gained largely. The day was dawning when he reached his own rooms. His writing-desk stood upon a *console* in front of a mirror; and, pausing over it to lock up his winnings, he was startled and shocked by the reflection of his face in the glass behind it. The expression of the countenance was not only haggard, it was sinister. He had risked far more than he could afford to lose; his luck had been extraordinary, and his gains were great. But the ignoble emotions of the night had left their lingering traces in his face; and, as he caught sight of his own features still working and gleaming with the fever of a vicious excitement, he, for the first time, despised himself.

It was then he formed a resolution that, be the circumstances of his future life what they might, no inducement, whether of need or greed, should again tempt him to become a gambler.

This resolution was never broken or relaxed. The origin of it was told me by my father, when I was myself a very young man; and I record it here because it throws some light upon events to be presently related. Possibly, a prudent investment of the winnings of that night may have founded, or largely increased, a fund which, by supplementing the proceeds of his incessant literary labour, and the interest on the small capital inherited from his father, afterwards enabled him to maintain, without serious debt, a rather expensive establishment during the first few years of his married life.

But it is remarkable that, notwithstanding his love of cards, his great aptitude for all games played with them, and the temptation, to which he must have been exposed when thrown entirely upon his own resources, of seeking now and then from the favour of chance some addition to his means less painfully acquired than the slow result of continual brain-work, he never, from the date of his marriage, either betted or indulged in games of hazard.

This, no doubt, was partly owing to the unsanguine nature of his disposition. For, though strong in resolution, he was weak in hope; and with great confidence in his own powers of exertion and endurance, he had an inveterate distrust of his luck. But it may also have been, and I think it was, an abstinence powerfully promoted by that sensitive and uncompromising self-respect which had been shocked and lowered when the sight of his own image in the warning glass determined him to resolve that his first experience of a gambler's sensations (even under their least unpleasant conditions) should also be his last.

CHAPTER IV.

'WEEDS AND WILDFLOWERS.' 1825. ÆT. 22.

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During his first visit to Paris, in 1825, my father printed a little volume there, for private circulation only, under the title of 'Weeds and Wildflowers,' and consisting of four pages of prose, and ninety-eight of verse "meandering through an ample meadow of margin." These blotting-paper pages of mingled prose and verse, in longprimer, stitched together in a green paper wrapper bearing the motto '*Per scopulos tendimus—ubi?*' and rudely illustrated by a woodcut representing a ship sailing between rocks and ruins, were dedicated to Alexander Cockburn. The prose portion is a series of original maxims, so characteristic, and the best of them so felicitous, that I will here insert two or three as specimens of a mind in which thought and reflection were matured earlier than the more mechanical faculties of expression.

Your friends speak worse of you than your enemies.

With women, love is often nothing but the pride they feel at being loved.

Never be little in order to become great.

We are made so much more for reflection than for sensuality, that the mind can contain at the same time a dozen sciences, but only one passion.

Vanity only offends when it hurts the vanity of others.

One sees every day that one can never judge of a person by the relation of others. Yet by what else does posterity decide upon the characters of the dead?

There is a rank peculiar to England,—Acquaintance. One is, there, as great by whom one knows as by what one is.

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If you wish to have a firm friend, choose one who can do something better than yourself.

There is no feeling of liberty like that of escape from half-friends.

'The Tale of a Dreamer,' written in 1824, was now printed in this collection of verses, with the motto '*O quam te memorem!*' and another and shorter poem on the same subject addressed 'To Thee'—the heroine of the Dreamer's Tale. The poem of 'Milton,' written at Cambridge, also made its first appearance among 'Weeds and Wildflowers.' Of the other compositions in verse printed for the first and last time under this title, the longest and most important is 'A Satiric Sketch' of Almack's, beginning with these lines:—

> To Lady S. . . ., for cakes and cards,
> Flock ancient lords on Wednesday nights;
> While darkest blues and lightest bards
> 'Refresh their souls' at Lydia White's.
> But those who have the happier fate
> To know the saints who guard its heaven,
> Pass on through Almack's holy gate,
> About three quarters past eleven.

With the exception of a rather snappish rebuke to Rogers the poet, and an unnamed caricature of a banker's wife notorious for her vulgarity, the satire is confined to its general reflections; and the personal portraits of Lady Cowper, Lady Jersey, Lady Ellenborough, Mrs. Norton (then Miss Sheridan), Lady Uxbridge, Madame de Lieven, Lady Grantham, Lady Gwydir, Lady Belfast, and Lady Exeter, are touched with all the gallantry appropriate to the subjects of them. But the only verses in this sketch which I think it worth while to quote here, on account of their biographical interest, are those which contain an allusion to Lady Caroline Lamb.

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The world, that mingles smiles with blame,
  Thy worth but poorly prized:
For love is vice, and softness shame,
  When both are undisguised.
But all thy woes have sprung from feeling;
Thine only guilt was not concealing;
And now, mine unforgotten friend,
  Though thou art half estranged from me,
My softened spirit fain would send
  One pure and pitying sigh to thee.
Though 'lips inspired' have breathed the vow
  More warm than friendship to thine ear,
Though many a voice be near thee now,
  More sweet, if haply less sincere,
Yet well I know one tone at least
  Even of this desultory lay
Will wake within thy silent breast
  The echoes of a dearer day;
And, saved from thoughts that seek the throng
  Whose thoughtless paths my footsteps flee,
One thought of thine shall still belong
  Ungrudged to memory and to me.

These stanzas are an evidence that the author of them had settled into the belief (and the same opinion was expressed by Rogers) that the passionate attachments of Lady Caroline were as innocent as they were mostly fickle. Writing, in friendly defence of her, verses which she herself was to read, he could not add the notorious fact that her proceedings were also the ebullitions of a flighty mind over which reason, in this direction, had no control. The tribute elicited two letters from Lady Caroline:—

I was ill (she says in the first), and have been thrown from my horse. Also my aunt, Lady Fitzwilliam, is dead. All of which prevented my sending you a letter I have begun—full of praise, but also of hints—upon your poems. You are really gifted with no small supply of natural genius. But study and stand by the great originals. Read the last 'Edinburgh' about Lord Byron. The faults of the present age, to my mind, are affectation, imitation,

and fear. If you write, do it from your heart, and then leave it, and correct it (as Cicero, I believe it is, says) nine years hence. As to my Tragedy, I will fully explain it the moment I am well enough. I have been cupped twice, and bathed, and done everything to: and yesterday, when riding, late, for the air—being weak—my beautiful black mare threw me. How I admire your ode to your horse! It is really beautiful. You are, like me, too fond of Lord Byron. Pray turn from the modern school. Stick to the old one, and write for, and from, yourself. Just going to Brocket.

The second letter was written from Brocket a few days later:—

I should have answered your letter long ago, had I ever had an innate idea. But I am convinced there is no such thing. How, then, can I write? Even imagination must have some materials upon which to work. I have none. Passions might produce sentiment of some sort, but mine are all calmed or extinct. Memory—a waste, with nothing in it worth recording. Happy, healthy, quiet, contented, I get up at half-past four, ride about with H., and see harvestmen at work in this pretty confined green country; read a few old books; see no one; hear from no one; and occasionally play at chess with Dr. G., or listen to the faint high warblings of Miss R. This contrast to my *sometime* hurried life delights me. Besides, I am well. And that is a real blessing to oneself, and one's companions. When you were so kind to me, how ill, how miserable, I was! If there be a place of punishment hereafter, assuredly the lost souls must feel as I did then. Pray write to me as you wrote then; even though your opinion of me, and affection—boyish affection—be utterly changed. Your letters were then beautiful and soothing. I detest wit, and humour, and satire. I fear you are now given to all this, and have lost the freshness of youthful feeling, the noble sentiments, and the warm vivid hopes and aspirations of an uncorrupted and unworldly heart. I drew my Good Spirit, in Ada Reis, from you, as I then imagined you. Pray do not turn into a Bad Spirit. Here are my notes on your poems. I beg you a million excuses for their impertinence. I have not said how very beautiful I think many of them are. But I have marked what I don't like. Perhaps there is no reason for my not liking what I have marked. But my liking and disliking are always sincere. What are you writing now? May I not be allowed to know? Farewell. Give my adoration to the

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dear Sea; whose every change I worship, and whose blue waves I long to dip in—provided two old women take me out again safely. Excuse this stupid letter, and write me a long and amiable one. Lady Dacre and Mr. Sullivan came over to see me yesterday. It is the first time I have seen anyone since my exile from home. To-morrow William Lamb says he will come. He has been at Hastings; with which he was delighted, as far as scenery goes, and climate. But he felt dull there, knowing no one, and having nothing to do. Without wife, or Parliament, or trouble of any kind, he ought now to have found in perfect quiet the true enjoyment he pined for. Yet, if I mistake not, he is less happy than when plagued with these apendages. If there are two p's in that word, imagine one, and pray excuse my spelling. Yours with sincere interest, and disinterested attachment.

Lady Caroline speaks of the affection bestowed upon herself. With good reason she avoided touching on her own, for she could not have reflected with complacency on the part she had played in trifling with affections she exerted her blandishments to win. Nor would she have ventured on her half-reproachful admonitions to her former admirer for having 'lost the freshness of youthful feeling, and the warm aspirations of an uncorrupted and unworldly heart,' if she had been capable of perceiving that conduct like hers had the principal share in producing the effects she condemned.

These 'weeds and wildflowers' of 1825, though not published, flourished for a season upon drawing-room tables, at Holland House, and other fashionable resorts of the writers and readers of new books. So far as may be guessed from the number of letters and verses, expressing sympathy or remonstrance, which they elicited from fair correspondents chiefly anonymous, they would seem to have been noticed with some gentle curiosity by literary ladies old and young: a curiosity excited, perhaps, more by the author than his verses. Be that as it may, they certainly found their way to a favoured place in the fancy of a young lady whose name appears at the head of the following chapter.

CHAPTER V.

ROSINA WHEELER. 1825. ÆT. 22.

IN the spring, or early summer, of this year my father returned to England. He carried with him a tumultuous consciousness of growing intellectual powers. His love of adventure and romance found no charm in the common conditions of a sedentary life; and the bent of his disposition was to seek in action, rather than in literature, the occupation of his superabundant energies. He had grown up among the stirring echoes of those great battles which preceded the downfall of Napoleon and the resettlement of Europe. The most illustrious men of the age under whose influence he was born had achieved their reputation in war, or in the statesmanship of a time when every nation was in arms. In the popular imaginative literature of that age the grandeur of action was more celebrated than the charms of contemplation. The heroes of his favourite poets, Scott, Byron, and Campbell, were men of daring deed or romantic adventure. 'Amadis of Gaul' and the 'Seven Champions of Christendom' had been the cherished companions of his childhood; Waterloo the first theme of his schoolboy song. Though no sportsman, he was a good rider, a good fencer, a good boxer. He delighted in danger for its own sake, and in every kind of bodily exercise. A soldier's career was, at this time, more congenial than any other to his tastes. It was also the most attractive to his ambition: and immediately after his return to England he

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purchased a commission in the army,[1] with the full intention of seriously embracing that profession. But, notwithstanding the masculine vigour of his energetic nature, the sentimental and emotional side of it was femininely sensitive; and this had been stimulated to a morbid excitability when he left Paris with a restless unsatisfied heart, guided by an imagination eager to create for it those delightful illusions which are so often the bitter punishments of demanding too much from the poor realities of life.

He reached London on the evening of his arrival in England. His mother's last letter to him had been dated from Knebworth; and, supposing her to be still in the country, he called, on his way to his hotel, to inquire after her at her house in Upper Seymour Street. It happened that she was in town, and at home, but just going out. The meeting between mother and son was not the less warm for being unexpected. They had much to say to each other; much to ask and to tell.

'But I am under a particular promise,' said the mother, 'to go to Miss Berry's this evening, and I can neither go, nor stay, late. Do come with me. It will be such a pleasure. And we can continue our talk there.'

[1] Thus officially recorded:—

'Public Record Office, War Office.

'Craig's Court, August 24, 1826.

'Sir,—We have the honour to report for the information of His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, that the sum of four hundred and fifty pounds has been lodged in our hands for the purchase of an unattached Ensigncy for Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer. We have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient, humble servants,

'GREENWOOD COOKE.

'Lieut.-General Sir Herbert Taylor, G.C.B.,
&c., &c., &c.'

He was never appointed to any regiment, and, having married and settled down to literary occupations twelve months after his purchase of this commission, he retired from it by sale three years later, on January 25, 1829.

One circumstance biographically connecting this military impulse with the literary avocations which soon quenched it, may be mentioned here. In the previous year, 1825, Mr. Bulwer had been elected a member of the Athenæum Club, that being the first year of the Club's existence.

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Though fatigued by his journey, and in no humour to appreciate the mild delights of a literary tea-party, her son dressed himself in haste, and accompanied her to the house of Miss Berry. There, in one of the rooms not yet invaded by other guests, they renewed their *tête-à-tête*; and, whilst thus conversing, Mrs. Bulwer Lytton suddenly exclaimed,—

'Oh, Edward, what a singularly beautiful face! Do look. Who can she be?'

An elderly gentleman was leading through the room in which they sat a young lady of remarkable beauty, who, from the simplicity of her costume, appeared to be unmarried.

My father, thus appealed to, turned his head languidly; and, with a strangely troubled sensation, beheld (to use his own phrase) 'his fate before him:' in other words, his future wife.

This biography has now reached a point at which the story of my father's life necessarily includes, to some extent, the story of my mother's. The circumstances of her childhood and girlhood, as related by herself in her first correspondence with my father, were very unhappy. But the briefest mention of them will suffice to explain why they powerfully stimulated his interest in, and attachment to, Miss Wheeler; whilst at the same time they entered largely into the motives of my grandmother for objecting to her son's marriage.

Rosina Doyle Wheeler was at this time twenty-three years of age, just one year older than my father, and in the full blossom of a beauty remarkably brilliant. Her father, Francis Massy Wheeler, of Lizzard Connel, in the county of Limerick, was an Irish squire; who, at the age of seventeen, had married a very beautiful girl two years younger than himself. The natural result of this marriage between a boy of seventeen and a girl of fifteen was a separation, which took place after the birth of two children, both of them daughters. Of these two children Rosina was the younger. Mrs. Wheeler, to

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whom the care of them had been consigned by the terms of her separation, went with her daughters to Guernsey; where she lived for some time as the guest of her kinsman, Sir John Doyle, who was then Governor of that island. She had a violent temper; which brought at last to an untimely end the friendly hospitalities of Sir John. She then went abroad, and settled eventually at Caen; where she became the *bel esprit* of a little group of socialists and freethinkers, to the support of whose doctrines she devoted both her purse and her pen.

Rosina, *matris pulchræ filia pulchrior*, was now seventeen. She was gifted with personal attractions which, unfortunately for her, instead of increasing the affection, only excited the jealousy and dislike, of her mother. The wretchedness of a home in which she could find neither shelter nor affection rendered welcome to her any opportunity of even temporary absence from it. With Mrs. Wheeler's assent, she returned to Ireland on a visit to a lady, considerably older than herself, who was the most intimate, and for many years the most devoted, of her early friends. This lady, Miss Greene, was the daughter of an English family settled in Ireland since the time of Cromwell. Through her previous intimacy with, and long-continued attachment to, my mother, she eventually became connected with the circumstances of my father's domestic life, to an extent which will necessitate frequent mention of her name in the further course of this biography.

Rosina, at the time of her visit to the family of Miss Greene, had never seen her father. Shortly afterwards, however, an interview between them was brought about by their friends, with a hope that it might result in the establishment of their mutual relations on a more natural footing. That result was not attained by it. But Mrs. Wheeler, on hearing of the interview, refused to receive back her daughter; who, when my father first saw her in London, had found there a temporary home in the house of her uncle. She had also found in him a generous protector and a judi-

cious friend: all the more needed because, in the meanwhile, she had survived both her father and her only sister.

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She wrote to me (says Miss Greene, in an unpublished memoir of her own life) about the acquaintances she had made in England with several literary people. Amongst others, she particularly mentioned Campbell, Miss Landon, and Lady Caroline Lamb. She seemed charmed with Campbell, and said how fatherly and kind he had been to her. But they soon quarrelled: I never heard about what. Miss Landon she spoke of very highly; and, indeed, sen me a note from that young lady which prepossessed me much in her favour.[1] For it was a most sensible remonstrance against excessive intimacy with Lady Caroline Lamb.[2]

At the house of Lady Caroline, or elsewhere, Miss Wheeler had been reading 'Weeds and Wildflowers.' They interested her: and the interest was increased by what she heard of their writer; who had, at this time, the reputation, more interesting to women than to men, of a good-looking, dandified and eccentric, but decidedly clever and ambitious, young man, from whose future career his friends expected great things; and who was, in the meanwhile, remarkably (in many respects agreeably) unlike other young men of his own age and class. The first letter she wrote to him, after the commencement of their acquaintance, was on the subject of these verses; and it flattered the vanity of the young author, who soon found in the society of his fair and appre-

[1] Miss Landon herself was then only seventeen.

[2] Of Lady Caroline Lamb Miss Wheeler wrote to Mr. Bulwer (shortly after the beginning of their acquaintance) on June 15, 1825:—'I do not deserve all the praises bestowed on me by Mr. Bulwer in the letter which Miss Spence has just sent me. My love for Lady Caroline Lamb is nothing but selfishness. What in this country is called propriety (but which is often nothing more than the would-be mask of heartlessness) long made me refuse to know her. It was by accident I became acquainted with her. To be so, and to love her, are one. Her very faults, which are but her own enemies (and on *that* account *alone* unpardonable), serve to make her virtues more conspicuous, as shades in a picture throw out the brighter tints. And if what Mr. Bulwer has so beautifully expressed, that "her only fault is not concealing," be not quite true, it is at least her greatest fault.'

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ciative critic a fresh attraction to the house of their common friend, at which Miss Wheeler was a frequent visitor.

About this time (continues Miss Greene), my dear mother died, and my sister and I went to France. From Rosina, though I often wrote to her, I received not a single letter during our absence abroad. But, about a month after our return, she wrote me one of her old, clever, affectionate letters, telling me the cause of her silence. First, her sister had died (in Paris), and next, she herself had been occupied by the attentions of a young gentleman, whose mother, a widow lady, objected to their marriage.

Before I speak of the widowed mother's objections I must explain her son's state of mind at the time of his first acquaintance and subsequent marriage with Miss Wheeler. What he had felt, in all the freshness and purity of his boyhood, for the nameless heroine of the romance described in his Autobiography, it was impossible that he should ever feel again. And of this impossibility he was fully conscious. Once, and once only, when he was long past middle life, the old emotions were partially revived under conditions which recalled the youthful dream. But in the long interval he was driven to renounce all hope of anything like a renewal of the unfulfilled ideal love. This renunciation left in his inner life a void that continually tormented him; and it disposed him, not only to accept with premature gratitude, but to seize with impatient avidity, any apparent promise of happiness from the exercise of his affection on a lower range. His nature was indeed so constituted that affection, in some form or other, was the paramount condition of its happiness and peace. There are some characters in which the *besoin d'être aimé* is the strongest motive power of all their activities, intellectual as well as moral. His was one of them. Men of this character cannot live without loving and being loved. To them there is a charm in sympathetic female companionship unapproached, and unreplaced, by any friendship, however intimate and cordial, with persons of their own sex.

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The character of the girl first loved by my father was probably as uncommon as the love he gave her, since her separation from him was fatal to a spirit so deep and tender that it could not survive a divided life. But what he felt for her must have owed much of its precocious intensity to the glow of an imagination too fervid to be quenched by the destruction of its first and fairest dreams. The less he was capable of renewing the romance of that early passion, the greater was his craving for the quiet tender sympathy only to be found in the affection of a woman. For this he still hoped, and this he was amply able to requite, though he at times spoke of himself as a blighted man who could offer nothing sufficient in exchange.

In what he now saw of Miss Wheeler there was much that was peculiarly calculated to invest her with a charm supplied by his imagination under the influence of these feelings. The effect of all her other gifts (and they were many) was enhanced by her remarkable beauty. He knew, from his own experience, that, in the world where it is ill at ease, a sensitive spirit often adopts a demeanour mistaken by superficial observers for the natural expression of a hard and shallow disposition; and he prided himself on not being a superficial observer. In her manner towards him there was something unconventional, which he interpreted as the artless manifestation of a frank, fearless, unsophisticated nature. The undisguised pleasure his attention seemed to cause her, and the powerful appeal of her worse than orphan condition to that compassionate sentiment by which, at all times, his heart was soonest touched and his judgment most easily misled, redoubled the force of the other motives, and had probably the largest share in enlisting his affections.

For Mrs. Bulwer Lytton the match had no attractions of any kind. Her pride, her prudence, her forebodings, and her motherly susceptibilities were all opposed to it. The paternal property was of course entailed upon the eldest brother,

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William; and Edward, being the youngest of the three boys, had only inherited from his father an income of 200*l.* a year. This income was largely increased by the liberality of his mother, whose marriage settlements had reserved to her the unrestricted disposal of all that remained of the once large property of the Lyttons. But English parents are under no moral, and fortunately for them they are free from any legal, obligation to make special provision for the natural consequences of imprudent marriages contracted by their children in opposition to their wishes. General Bulwer, in his alliance with Miss Lytton, had contemplated the ultimate union of the Lytton with the Bulwer property in the line of his own family and name: and the eldest of his sons might naturally regard the wishes of his father as entitled to exercise considerable influence upon the intentions of his mother in the disposal of her property. Apart from the small provision made for him by his father's will, Edward had at this time no sources of income that were not entirely dependent either on his own exertions or on his mother's affection. He had been reared in habits of luxury not common to the younger sons of country gentlemen, and early initiated into all the pleasures and excitements which the world can offer to the combined demand of wealth and youth. He had as yet never known privation, never been pinched for money. Sensitively proud, he would have suffered intolerably from any position in life which left him unable to hold his head high, and look the world in the face with the most complete consciousness of being under no pecuniary obligation or liability to any man. His marriage with Miss Wheeler seemed to threaten and invite the evil, with the certainty that necessitous humiliations would be tenfold more bitter to him if a wife were involved in them.

His mother's sense of maternal property in him could hardly fail to take alarm as well as her prudence. Of her three sons, my father was the one to whom her heart had

been closest drawn by all the circumstances of his childhood. William, her first-born, was independent of her from the moment of his father's death. Henry, her second son, was the special favourite of his grandmother, with whom his early years were chiefly passed, and by whose affection he was assured of a liberal income during her lifetime, and the whole of her fortune after her death. Edward, a delicate and interesting child, was thus the last of the three boys left beside the widow's hearth. His education had been the chief interest of her life; and now, in a youth mature beyond its years, he was the confidant and adviser to whom she looked for counsel and comfort in all her little lonely troubles or undertakings. The intercourse between these two was on both sides so tender, and so unreserved, that the poor mother would not have been human had she contemplated without trepidation its sudden extension to another. It was natural that she should wish for some share in the selection of any person to be invested by her son with rights over his conduct, his affections, his very thoughts, to which hers must give way if the claims of the wife were opposed to those of the mother. It was equally natural that she should contemplate with repugnance and alarm his selection of Miss Wheeler for the helpmate of a life as yet barely begun.

Her own life was singularly quiet and dignified. It had been one long act of devotion and self-sacrifice to principles publicly repudiated and ridiculed by the only surviving parent of her future daughter-in-law. And, indeed, the very circumstances which helped to deepen my father's interest in Rosina Wheeler—her forlorn childhood, and unguided girlhood—only suggested to my grandmother additional reasons for mistrusting the wisdom, and fearing the consequences, of his growing attachment. Thus, for the first and last time of his life, and in reference to the most important action of it, his relations with his mother gradually assumed an attitude of reluctant but resolute opposition to

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her wishes: and from this opposition he suffered acutely in what was to him, not an affection only, but a religion.[1]

A knowledge of the divergent views of mother and son, and the motives which influenced each, will throw light on the correspondence that grew out of the course of events. The letter which follows was written by my father in reply to his mother's first remonstrances on the subject of his increasing intimacy with Miss Wheeler.

My dearest Mother,—Your eloquent letter only convinces me that even the most sensible persons may sometimes err through prejudice in the harshness of their judgment. . . . It is not when she is unjustly attacked that I can cease to befriend, and defend, her. Believe me, my dearest mother, I do not say this from any selfish feeling. I have no desire, no design, to marry her. And I promise you on my honour, as a man, and my duty as a son, that I will not marry without your consent. This is due to you for all you have done for me, all you have been to me; and this at least you may depend upon. After this assurance, however, may I not plead with you for justice to Rosina's character? Judge her, not as a woman ever likely to be connected with you, but as you would judge the character of Miss H—— or Miss C——. I am going to Brocket to-day, and shall ride there on my new horse. Can I turn the other out to grass at Knebworth? I must be in town to-morrow, in order to get to Cheltenham on Tuesday. If I can call at Knebworth, I will. If I do not, it will be because the ride proves too long for my horse, not for myself. I go to Brocket mainly to ask Lady Caroline to speak to Murray about a poem I think of publishing.

[1] Many years later, in a letter to Lady Osborn (of condolence on the death of her mother) he wrote:—'All that I have met in the world of sympathy, generosity, and faithful friendship, is identified with the name of Mother. And the thought of that loss seems to me like the taking away of the candle from a child who is terrified at the dark. It is a protection and a safety gone, a dreary solitude begun; and all we have left is to wish the night were gone and the morrow come.' He never ceased to love what she had loved, or to venerate what she had revered. Not over his childhood only, but his manhood also in its ripest maturity, her maternal influence resembled that of Julia Procilla over the mind of Agricola. 'Mater raræ castitatis: in hujus sinu indulgentiaque educatus, per omnem honestarum artium cultum pueritiam adolescentiamque transegit.'—Tacitus, *Agricola*, iv.

The visit to Brocket had doubtless a stronger motive than literary consultation with Lady Caroline Lamb: for Miss Wheeler was there. But it was for the purpose of parting from her in a manner which, without wounding their friendship, would sufficiently dispel any matrimonial expectations founded upon it, that he then sought her. Of Mrs. Bulwer Lytton's strong objection to her son's marriage with Miss Wheeler, that young lady was fully aware; and she also knew that Mr. Bulwer's income was almost entirely dependent on his mother's generosity. From every point of view, therefore, the young lady's self-respect was entitled to claim for herself the regulation of her further intercourse with a gentleman placed in this position. The cessation or the continuance of that intercourse (and, in the latter case, the terms of its continuance) primarily rested with her.

Up to this point, my father had believed, erroneously no doubt, but sincerely, that neither Miss Wheeler's feelings nor his own were in any danger of seriously suffering from the pledge he even then felt able to give to his mother. But, having given that pledge which bound his honour as a son, he could no longer trifle with a connection to which his honour was not yet committed as a lover. And, when he felt that, to himself at least, his intimacy with Miss Wheeler was becoming dangerously dear, he resolutely plucked himself away from it. From Cheltenham, where, on leaving Brocket, he sought change of thought in change of scene, he wrote to his mother, 'God knows that, in spite of that great dejection and despondency of spirit which make me at times so silent and at others so querulous, I do feel most tenderly attached and grateful to you. Even now, I have sacrificed much that is dear to me from the heartfelt desire that in all the great events of my life I may secure your approbation, and that in no event of it you may ever be ashamed of the kindness and affection you have shown me. God bless you, mother, dearest mother!'

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Shortly after this, he was again at Paris; and busily occupied in the subjugation of a feeling which duty, reason, and every instinct of self-preservation now warned him to resist. Unfortunately for the success of his efforts, however, he was pursued at Paris by 'messengers which feelingly persuaded' him that the happiness, possibly even the social prospects, of a woman whom he tenderly esteemed, were involved in the issue of what he had till then regarded as a 'flirtation' dangerous to no feelings or interests but his own.

In that belief he again returned to England in the beginning of April 1826. Meanwhile, the months of February and March, passed mainly at Versailles, were a not unproductive period of his literary life.

CHAPTER VI.

THE 'NOUVELLE HÉLOÏSE.' 1826. ÆT. 22

THE state of my father's feelings when he returned to Paris unfitted him to find there the recreation he was in search of. The pleasures of the place were no longer new to him: but social intercourse is so much easier and livelier in Paris than in London that, had his mind been unburdened and his heart unoccupied, he would probably have derived from the increased familiarity of his relations with that old French society (in whose conversation and manners a refined and comprehensive mode of life was then flowering out), many enjoyments more perfect than those of the enchanted curiosity with which he had first entered it. As it was, he could not now meet his old French friends of the Faubourg without embarrassment and reserve. The plans of the Irish Abbé, so far as they concerned his English *protégé*, had broken down; which is what commonly happens with the plans we gratuitously form for the welfare of those whose destiny is unconnected with our own by any natural relationship. For beneath the surface of every man's life there are unalterable facts imperfectly perceived, or not perceived at all, by his disinterested well-wishers; and, like sunken rocks in an unsounded sea, what is hidden shatters the benevolent purposes put forth on his behalf by the officious providence of friends. To my father the house of the Larochejaqueleins could no longer be what it had been. For some part of the charm of what it had been

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was in the chance of what it might be. But Hecuba was now nothing to him, nor he anything to Hecuba. General society only aggravated the inward trouble from which it failed to distract him. When the mind is absorbed by a great idea, a great passion, or a great anxiety, incessant intercourse with those to whom its pre-occupation is unknown soon ceases to be tolerable; and, from the fear of being burdensome to others, my father found company an increasing weariness to himself. In this condition the congenial solitudes of Versailles attracted him even more powerfully than before; and thither he betook himself.

The growth of confidence between new friends may always be traced in a rising succession of the subjects to which it is gradually extended. It passes from things trivial to things serious, and sometimes, at last, from the serious to the sublime. At first it plays in a light joyful wonder over its newly-discovered community of tastes and feelings about places, persons, books, and the lesser occupations of life. But by degrees it deepens into an intimate interchange of communications about sentiments past and present, love affairs, and the experiences of the heart: and, if it endures, the consummation of it embraces the higher secret aspirations of the soul, religious ideas, spiritual doubts or yearnings, even the dim outlines of unattainable ideals which seem to have a common origin in the intercourse they illumine and exalt. This kind of confidence is sweetest and least selfish when it exists between two persons of opposite sexes who have great sympathy, but no passion, for each other; and the earlier stages which mark the growth of such a confidence are apparent in the letters written at this time from Versailles by my father to Mrs. Cunningham in Paris. For which reason these letters also indicate, in a livelier manner than any less unconscious record, the general course of his thoughts and occupations in the suburban retreat to which he had now fled.

Edward Bulwer to Mrs. Cunningham.

Versailles: February 1826.

Love has often an interest to beguile, to abandon, to betray. But the interest of Friendship is constancy; and its very existence depends upon its truth. While I am writing on this subject, let me confess to you that I am glad you did not shew me the verses you mention. To you, who are so superior to most women, I should not like to talk as I would to those who are immeasurably your inferiors in all the attributes which are, to me, the most attractive of your too-attractive sex. Do you forgive my frankness? Or do you laugh at me for my simplicity? Answer my first question in the affirmative, and you shall have full liberty to answer the last as you please.

You doubt not but that I shall marry some dissipated and worldly woman. Never! And that is one reason why I shall probably not marry till late in life—supposing, what is very unlikely, that I ever shall be *late in life*. My mother, whose parental affection is mixed, perhaps, with a more than common quantity of maternal pride in her offspring, is anxious that I should make a match worldly at least as regards its promotion of that wonderful career which her kind imagination has created for me in the days to which I may never attain. I am not only too dependent on her generous kindness, but also far too grateful for it, ever to make a marriage she would condemn. But, at least, a negative liberty is left to me; and I shall employ it. Love—I mean that of the soul, not of the senses—is dead to me for ever. The feelings which are early unfolded are soon blighted. And how shall *such* feelings bloom again? Like the burnt child, we shrink from the flame that has scorched us. And, when I perceive in myself the growth of any passion that promises to be real, I do not rest till I have destroyed it to the very root. Once only, of late, I have been in danger. But to the young and pure heart which has never awakened from the repose of its innocence, that heart would indeed have been an unworthy offering which has survived its best emotions, and sacrificed the freshness of youth above a grave in which passion has buried all that could save it from the premature satiety of age. You are laughing at my sentiment! And it is that laugh, and your own indifference, which probably preserve me from the danger I might otherwise have found in you. Laugh on, then, and preserve

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yourself from the poisonous perfume of poetical flowers, and the feverish contagion of romantic reflections.

Send me your sonnet, I implore you. Nothing would refresh me so much as poetry. I mean poetry by anyone else; for I am surfeited with my own, in spite of its exceeding and ineffable beauties! I have just finished the first part of a poem [1] which merits the incredible sum of money Mr. Murray will doubtless decline to give me for it. It is a tale to suit the day. Ireland the scene. Full of rebels, banshees, and scaffolds: interspersed with various and profound observations, satirical and political, upon the state and government of that peaceable little province. But I long, eagerly, for your sonnet, and shall feel seriously disappointed, if it does not come in your next note. In the meanwhile, I wander through the forest, which has a great many crooked, as well as straight, walks; cautiously turning into a new path whenever (which is rarely) I see a human being approaching. Brought up from my childhood to love solitude, I still cling to nature as to a mother. But *le vrai livre de la nature est pour moi le cœur; et la preuve que j'y sais lire est dans mon amitié pour vous. Adieu!*

This letter elicited an exceedingly sensible answer:—

Mrs. Cunningham to Edward Bulwer.

Paris: February 1826.

My dear Childe Harold,—Your letter, just received, relieves my mind. I had great doubts whether, in your Diogenes mood, you would ever think of sending to the Post Office. But, as you have done so, I shall venture to reply. Your letter is now, according to your wish, consuming in the most wonderful of all elements. But I cannot agree with you about many things in it. You will love again, and be very vext at yourself for it. Your lost love will fade into the past. As, however, you do not mean to marry till your hair is gray, our friendship may last; for I think a man's wife should be his only female friend. And by that time I shall be dead. What do you think of St.-Preux? His argument with Lord Edward, on suicide, is well written. Julie had an excellent idea of Platonic love, had she not? How could she live so long with her lover under the same roof with that nasty old husband of hers? Walmer is my detestation. I always fancy him in a cocked hat, and square-toed

[1] *O'Niel, the Rebel.* See Book V., chap. i.

shoes, with huge buckles. It is not true to nature. How good of you to spare me so many thoughts! I am obliged to others for the expression of my own feelings. I shall never cease thanking Lord Byron for his beautiful descriptions of love and friendship. Why, when I can so feel, cannot I so write?

Edward Bulwer to Mrs. Cunningham.

Versailles: February 1826.

As for 'Julie,' with which I have been exceedingly bored and amused at the same time, I think both the hero and the heroine insufferable. St.-Preux, with his mawkish and whining declamations upon virtue, and Julie, with her sentimental sensuality at one time, and her heartless perfection at another. Don't talk to me of the descriptions of love. There is no love in it. But, alas, to those who have felt passion, what can the description of it bring but disappointment?

What detestable paper one gets at Versailles! My servant will convey to you this proof of the truth of that profound observation. I admire your galloping observation upon fire. It is, indeed, the most wonderful of all elements. And I have sat thinking of it for hours; but my thoughts were like the 'passages' in Gray's humorous description of Gothic architecture. 'They led to nothing.' Let me, however, draw from it one comparison. The Religious Metaphysicians have said, 'But this mysterious entity, the soul, which has lived so palpably within you, whither can it fleet after your death? You do not conceive that it evaporates.' Well, I take my answer from the fire. You afford it materials upon which to exist, and it does exist. It gives animation and life to the matter upon which it preys. It warms, pervades, vivifies all around it. But while it glows, it destroys its own *palpable* existence. It consumes the body that supports it. And, when its material subsistence is gone, I ask, with the Religious Metaphysicians, 'Where does it go, itself?' It goes to mingle with the other elements. There it preserves its inspiring and inflammable qualities. Anon it is attracted by a new substance. Upon this it seizes, and then it vivifies, blazes, and destroys, as before. So with the soul. As to my poem, it will not be published till May. But you know I have printed a few others,[1] for particular friends only; and they will be upon your table in a few days. I suppose I must come to 'the great city' in the course

[1] *Weeds and Wildflowers.*

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of the week. And, for fear of losing my way, I shall (to borrow a French idiom) *find* myself at your house the evening of my arrival.

You say, if I could but 'know your singular position,' and express various other hints and innuendoes very irritating—not to the curiosity of an acquaintance, but to the interest of a friend. How is it that there are so many mysteries still between us? Most of my secrets you, with your quick penetration, will discover in the poems I shall soon send you. All other revelations left incomplete may be made in prose. I wish I could write something amusing. But I am dull, dejected, lifeless. And, if your letter had not roused me into something like pleasure, I should have lacked the mental energy to lift my looks from a large closely-printed quarto now before me. You will not be surprised to hear that it has been open for the last three hours at page 49, when I tell you that it is 'Sinclair on the Revenue.'

What beautiful letters you write! Lady Caroline writes well, but not so naturally. French women, in general, write the best, particularly when their imagination is excited. I have some letters from an uneducated French girl which astonish me by their intelligence and beauty. Pray give me some more poetry. Your inspirations charm me. One word, however, I can't read. At which I am exceedingly discomposed. Have you read L. E. L.'s poetry? She is only eighteen, and possesses the same extempore flow. I admire your prophetic wisdom, when you so safely contradict me about love, and tell me I shall think differently of it at thirty. I began the world at sixteen.[1] That is five years before anyone else. Consequently I am, in fact, very nearly thirty now. For it is events, not years, that age the mind. Am I like any other young man, just of age? *J'ai vécu beaucoup en peu d'années. Et c'est le chemin des passions qui m'a conduit* . . . alas, I dare not add, to Philosophy, but to a state resembling that silence after storm in which we shrink from the turbulence of emotion, and covet the repose of insensibility. What a beautiful play is the 'Misanthrope' of Molière! I know not how many times I have read it. Was Célimène's final decision the right one? To come, however, to a person very different from Célimène—your liking of society, and mine of solitude, convince me how much gentler and more perfect is the practical philosophy of women than that of men. There must be some time for those who are of your sex, as well as for those who are of mine, when they feel, and sicken at, the hollowness, the insincerity, the sameness of the world. But you do not suffer these feelings to

[1] The date of his Ealing adventure.

revolt you too far against it. You force yourselves into a wise reconcilement to its defects. You do not 'chafe because of the ungodly.' We, when disappointed, yield at once to the bitter impressions that disappointment leaves upon our character. The world has betrayed us, and we fly to solitude for refuge from the resentful sense of that betrayal. Fools that we are! the passions, which were our real seducers and betrayers, still pursue and possess us. And it is not in solitude that we can escape from ourselves.

The opinion of the 'Nouvelle Héloïse' expressed in this letter is more fully recorded in one of my father's note-books written at the same time.

Rousseau's 'Julie.'

Versailles: 1826.

Celebrated books, like celebrated persons, generally disappoint us. Reality never equals the imagination. This, with me, was the case in reading the 'Nouvelle Héloïse.'

It is the first volume only which is dangerous. Nothing can equal the beauty of the style. It is too beautiful to be natural. There is too much point and period. The remaining volumes are somewhat tedious. It is a bathos to begin with love, and continue and conclude with friendship. The characters are all unnatural. Very great geniuses generally draw from themselves, or from ideas peculiar to themselves. Hence their ideal creations, like themselves, are uncommon, and to the world they seem unnatural. 'Julie' begins with great sensuality, and ends with great sentiment. The two letters of St.-Preux, the one before and the one after the fulfilment of his passion, are masterpieces of style. And the latter is even natural. But, as for the first . . . Who ever sat down at such a moment, to write a letter to his mistress? What! with the heart beating, the hand trembling, the senses confused, the mind bewildered, half-delirious, every thought lost in emotion,—sit down to write a letter? Impossible. The character of St.-Preux is feeble, and irresolute. This gives him an appearance of susceptibility which during the *premières amours* and at the age of twenty-four, is interesting and delightful; but which becomes exceedingly tiresome and drivelling when the passion has subsided, and the man is thirty. Nothing could be more canting and insipid than his sickly and eternal declamations upon Virtue.

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Lord Edward Bomston is a great, and a very odd, character. Nor would he have been unnatural, except in the completeness of his virtues, but for the singular incidents from which Rousseau has thought proper to construct the account of his life. A man of strong mind may be violently in love. And Lord Edward is supposed to be violently in love with Lauretta. He flies from Rome to England to avoid her; and from England to Rome to see her again. This also a man of strong mind might do. But only once or twice. Lord Edward does it continually for several years. This a man such as Bomston is portrayed would never have done. He would have decided one way or the other. And when we reflect on his constant occupations, his pursuits in the army, the House, the Cabinet, this irresolution (generally the friend of love, because it is the offspring of idleness) appears still more unlikely. But *is* he so violently in love? No. Here is another contradiction. What man violently in love would suffer another to take away his intended, shut her up in a convent, and, on hearing of it, say nothing, do nothing, express no grief, no resentment, caress the man who did it, and sit down to write a cold letter to another, inclosing a sketch of a pavilion?

Walmar also is so far unnatural that no man possessing a profound knowledge of human nature would have exposed his wife to the risk she runs by living in the same house with St.-Preux. She was, it is true, exceedingly good; but she was also exceedingly susceptible. St.-Preux was her first lover. His love had not been platonic or unsatisfied. He, himself, is still in love. Julie, Walmar acknowledges, still loved him (though very innocently, as he wisely observes), and the same senses which have transgressed duty before were certainly liable to the transgression of it again. All this by a man of warm feelings might have been disregarded; and by a man ignorant of the world it might have been unperceived. But Walmar is neither the one nor the other. Cold, not carried away by romance, deeply inquiring into human nature, he was the last man naturally capable of sanctioning such an arrangement. As it was, Julie was terribly in danger; and with no other man than St.-Preux would she have been safe.

Julie is intolerable. A more odious paragon than Clarissa, a sort of Hannah More, an epistolary schoolmistress, always correcting, advising, encouraging, and doing right. God defend me from reading again the letters about her marriage. And then, she is a gourmand. Absolutely a gourmand. And her death! Dressed

and tricked out, flowers and lace. That may be forgiven; but not her theatrical discourses, her gaiety, her very long speech to the minister, and the snug little dinner she pressed them to eat. She talks about the dishes; finds, yes, absolutely finds an appetite herself, gets up, refuses the *blanc de volaille*, gormandises over some fish, and 'finds it good.' Does anyone find such a death-scene affecting?

Unfortunately the concluding pages of this note are torn out of the book from which I have copied it. Its remarks upon the character of St.-Preux suggest a question I shall not attempt to answer, but which it might perhaps be worth while to follow out in any critical survey of sentimental fiction: Why is it that in the greatest love-tales of French literature (such as 'Manon Lescaut' and the 'Nouvelle Héloïse') the hero is generally the weak, and the heroine the strong, character? It is not so in the corresponding department of English fiction. It is not Clarissa in all her virtue, it is Lovelace in all his vice, who is the really strong and commanding character of Richardson's great romance. Lovelace is terrible; the lovers of Manon and Julie are only contemptible. The same unfailing virility is conspicuous in the heroes of my father's most sentimental fictions, as regards the manifestations of their characters under the influence of love; and it equally distinguishes the love-poetry of Byron from that of De Musset. But from the love-poems and novels of our contemporary literature this masculine attribute has almost disappeared. What are the social or intellectual causes of the change?

CHAPTER VII.

RETURN TO ENGLAND. 1826. ÆT. 22.

Edward Bulwer to Mrs. Cunningham.

Versailles: February 25, 1826.

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MANY thanks for your admonitory caution to advertise you of my coming, beforehand. I am only waiting in Versailles to finish four or five books I have to read with some attention. I shall then return to Paris for five days. And then . . . then? I am like one of the leaves I now see before my window, whirled away by the wind, without an aim, without a use; its destination unknown, its end unregarded.

Two sides of your letter are about that phantasmagoria of your imagination, that Lady Mary; whose birth, parentage, and life, are only to be found in your luxuriant fancy. The respect due to her as a creation of yours makes me desire, like Molière's doctors, to put an end to her in the most delicate and orthodox manner. Need I again remind you of what I have so often told you, about my mother's wishes and my own feelings on the subject of matrimony? With neither the one nor the other would such an alliance be in any wise reconcilable. I am too proud to marry for money; too poor to marry without it. And to marry for love, I have already loved too well. Lady Marys, though rarely rich, are generally extravagant; and as for *this* Lady Mary of yours . . . Well, now, is not her epitaph becomingly written? Dead she is, and buried with due decorum. *Requiescat in pace!* But may she find no resurrection in the hereafter of our correspondence.

Talking of resurrection (excuse blots, by the way), my course of thought and reading have led me lately into some of the most deserted regions of metaphysics. I was beginning to think I could deduce from proofs, not, indeed, complete, but far more cogent in their suggestion than any I have found among the books I am

reading, the existence of an eternal, perfect, and *provident* Creator. Yesterday, whilst I was absorbed in the meditation of this idea, *voilà mon Abbé qui arrive*. I made him stay the evening; and we sat up all last night discussing this question. Never before did I hear a priest argue so fairly, or evince such logical precision and freedom from cant and sophistry. No, nor yet such profound erudition. He has given me new lights; which, if here and there they reveal new difficulties, have at least illuminated the whole subject, and indicated new pathways through it; though not, perhaps, exactly in the direction along which his own lamp leads him.

But see how I am talking with you, just as if you were, not only a man, but a man superior to most men in elevation of thought and range of research! Well, the greatest compliment a man can pay to a woman is to remember that her mind is in many respects equal, in some superior, to his own. And this because men fancy that women are not to be reasoned with. All folly! But then, men are such fools.

Long letters from England! Possible that I shall go to Russia instead of Switzerland. Lady C. Stanhope to be married, they say, to the Duke of Newcastle, a widower with children. I am obliged to give up the gardens. English people beginning to come here. You may imagine what they are, when I tell you that they seem the refuse of those in Paris; of whom the greater number are the refuse of those in England.

The *projets de voyage* referred to at the close of this letter had no result. My father did not visit Switzerland till some years later; and Russia he never visited at all.[1] But in the spring of 1826 he had abundant cause to crave from any new and distant scene even a temporary release from the contemplation of his actual position. He stood now at the parting of the ways: but not, like Hercules, with complete freedom to choose between them: and all the letters written by him at this time reveal the increasing agitation of his mind.

[1] His common-place books for the year 1826 contain copious notes upon Russian history and society. They were probably made in view of this projected visit to St. Petersburg; and some of them may perhaps have been utilised in the composition of his fourth novel *Devereux*, published three years later, in 1829.

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Within a few days after the date of his last letter to Mrs. Cunningham he was again at Paris: this time, upon his way back to England; and in a state of mind painfully indicated by the following note.

Edward Bulwer to Mrs. Cunningham.

Paris: (undated) 1826.

Your kind and touching note has hurt me while it flattered. Believe me capable of anything but coldness of heart. The fact is, I am just now in a state of great and increasing anxiety. Ask me the cause, and, if this will ensure your forgiveness of the effect, I will tell you what I have confided to no one else—not even to my mother, not even to Cockburn; as regards whom you do me injustice in supposing that I do not love him. I feel for him the warmest, the liveliest, affection. I admire him immensely, and love him heartily, unreservedly. It is not from want of confidence that I have not told him what I do not tell you; but from a dislike of talking about my own affairs, and an idea that the manner in which they affect me can have no interest for anyone else. How can you expect me to come to you all 'nods, and becks, and wreathèd smiles,' when I am quivering from the strain of an internal struggle which inflames every unamiable feeling? But never, my dear friend, shall I forget you. Never shall I cease to think of you with interest, with tenderness, with unalterable friendship. Would that these feelings could change my nature, and make me more worthy of your esteem! God bless you, now and for ever. I shall see you to-morrow.

On that favourite Andalusian horse which receives special mention in his Autobiography, he now commenced his homeward journey; riding all the way from Paris to Dieppe, and from Dieppe to Calais and Boulogne. His Parisian friend, who had tried to laugh him out of this project, wrote to him, on the second day of its execution, the following letter:—

My dear Childe,—I know not if you have ever felt, on the day of the departure of some dear friend, when your thoughts are mostly occupied by regrets, that, if you hear his name unexpectedly mentioned by some stranger, it causes you a sensation of sharp pain.

Yesterday, at the Opera, I heard your name mentioned. You were met on the Boulevards, when I fancied you trotting away on your road to Dieppe. I bravely denied the fact. You wicked little man, to make me tell a lie! But you were right. Love should claim your last moments, undisturbed. I am dreadfully *maussade* to-day. Not cold, or callous; but feelingly alive to all impressions —headache, heartache, and a thousand aches—all because the sun does not shine, and it is cold, and it rains. The servants have not lit the fires, because it was hot yesterday. I do hate my carcase! It gives so much trouble, and *will* feel all these things. After all, it is really more disagreeable than one's soul. Under the impression of our adieux, I send you some lines. Dear Childe, what a day for your Quixotic ride! If you have no Dulcinea with you, I pity you. You must be the thin man at the inn; not the stout one. I can tell you no news. The world is as dull as possible. The Duke of Devonshire goes to Russia. He told me so yesterday. I am sure, ambitious though I am, I should not like to go there as his wife. It is a horrid country. We hear it is to be deluged with blood; and the coronation ceremonies celebrated by executions. The rival Duchesses quarrel, as usual, about their cavaliers. That little mischievous sprite, who caused the famous duel, is certainly (in spite of her teeth, for they are bad) the most *piquante*, *séduisante*, little imp I ever saw.[1] The lovely Ida is still very sad.[2] *Le monde l'abîme.* I pity her, and I believe her only sin is being too good to cope with them. Adieu! If you are safe in your inn, be grateful, and write to me.'

He did write: and I subjoin the letters which describe the course of this 'Quixotic ride.'

Edward Bulwer to Mrs. Cunningham.

Rouen: April 17, 1826.

Your letter, which I read for the first time last night, has occupied the whole of my attention during the stormy weather of to-day. Pigott, who left Paris with me (for fear I should lose either my way or my spirits without his superintendence), is the sole cause of my not having answered it sooner. When I write to the few who

[1] The Duchesse de Firmacon, whose father was Talleyrand's brother.

[2] The Duchesse de Guiche, Count D'Orsay's sister.

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engross my better thoughts and feelings, I dislike the proximity of other people. There is something infectious in common characters. One catches their insipidity. Whilst addressing you let me have no companion but Remembrance, no interruptions but the thoughts which it recalls. There are things in your letter which perplex and confuse me. I beseech you to explain them more fully. All half-confidences are more unsatisfactory than none. You may be sure that I will send to the post-office at Dieppe directly I get there. Your letter can then, I hope, be answered more fully. As to your female friend (of the particulars of whose treachery I am of course profoundly ignorant), I can only trust that in no case, for the future, you will expect perfect friendship from your own sex. Two friends are rarely met with; two women friends, never. Except in 'Julie!'

My own, and true friend (true since we are of different sexes), you accuse me of having suffered a coolness to grow between us. Was it, in the first place, my fault? If you say 'yes,' then are there no causes for it in particular circumstances which you well know? I will tell you moreover another cause; which is one reason of my increasing dislike to society. It is a painful sense of my own unfitness for it. One year has altered me so much in person and in mind—has rendered me so little amiable, or even tolerable—that I never enter a room without the idea that I am going to be still more disliked, and never leave it without the impression that my expectation was well founded. Is this vanity? It is certainly not self-confidence. It is doubly tiresome of you to talk to me of walks in St.-Germain forest, and other things which, even in *badinage*, you would not have hinted at, if I were not on the eve of quitting France.

This has been to ordinary mortals a terrible day. But I have one exemption from the ordinary ills of mortality. I rarely or never catch cold. Rain and wind are congenial to me. At this moment, I am dripping with wet, for I have sent on my luggage, and have no change of clothes. But this is not foolhardiness. It is not from physical causes that my health ever breaks down. I thrive on fatigue, and hardship strengthens me. But in cities, amidst quiet and luxury, I am pursued by those worst of all diseases—remembrance and regret. I thank you for the partiality of your compliment to my poetry; but I feel that it is not as a poet I am to fulfil the end of my existence. Verse is the faculty which for the last four or five years I have least cultivated and esteemed. I shall cultivate and esteem it more, however, if it gains me the approbation

of minds like yours. Farewell, my dear friend. My thoughts are with you. I reach Dieppe to-morrow ; and shall receive, and answer, your letter before I am on the sea. Amidst the sombre apprehensions of the future, and the bitter recollections of the past, it is one consolation that you have deemed me deserving of your esteem. I shall often look upon your ring, and rejoice on the emblem it presents to me. For there, at least, our hands are clasped upon the symbol of Eternity.

Abbeville: April 19, 1826.

My dear and forgetful Friend,—I waited one day and a half at Dieppe in the hope of receiving your expected letter. Finding that it did not arrive, I at length remounted, and pursued my solitary way to Calais : an additional journey, quite unforeseen by me, and only recompensed by the additional health I derive from it. Of course, on reaching Dieppe, I was informed that no steam-vessel was then plying : that the last sailing-boat bound for Brighton had remained fifteen days at sea ; that no others would make a similarly short and delightful voyage for ten days ; and that, if time was no object to me, I might wait at Monsieur Petit's London Hotel till the first of June, in full confidence that on that day the fine and famous steam-vessel called the 'Espérance' would leave Dieppe at 8 o'clock in the morning, and reach Brighton at 6 the same evening. An *espérance*, however, so long delayed, was not likely to make my stomach, though it might make my heart, sick. And so, *me voici* at Abbeville.

My writing will puzzle you, and . . . There again ! another blot ! Good heavens, was there ever such ink, such pens , such paper, as those produced at Abbeville by the *Tête de Bœuf* ? If I were autocrat of France, letters should be written only upon vellum, and no one should scribble with any but crowquills. Mozart wrote his music on gold-edged foolscap. Rousseau stitched his 'Héloïse' with rose-coloured ribbon. Lord Byron wrote his *billets-doux* on paper of the most delicate pink. And shall *our* correspondence be recorded, like that of a Tomkins or a Smith, upon this vile material ? Let us at least rejoice in the reflection that our friendship has no need of the auxiliaries of the imagination. The intimacy which detects no blemish in the character will heed no blot upon the paper ; and, however ungracefully they be traced, the words of truth and affection could not be more precious were they inscribed in letters of gold. Pray what are you doing ? Does the

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Bois of to-morrow succeed to the *Tuileries* of to-day? And, whilst *I* am courting nature upon the flat roads of France (where she only reveals herself in the form of ploughed fields and thin sheep) are *you* daily finding out the truth of Bacon's beautiful sentence (which Byron has so gracefully stolen) that 'Talk is but a tinkling cymbal, the resorts of men but a gallery of pictures, and society a solitude in which there is no love?' Have you seen my long cousin?—that six feet of stupidity (as long and dull as one of Mr. Southey's poems) whose frankness and simplicity of character make me love him, nevertheless, like a brother. So true is one of my maxims that, to be loved, we should not display our more dazzling qualities. One may *esteem* the strong, but one *loves* the weak. This maxim, however, refers only to friendship; and that again, the friendship only which is commonest between men. Perhaps, like all feelings which pretend to spring from the heart, vanity is the main source of it. I am near my conclusion. I told you, mine own friend, that I would write again to you before I left France. I have kept my promise. This letter seems to me, however, both flippant and yet dull. But it shall be like the bird whose wanton rovings through the day return at evening with a true and steady flight to its invariable resting-place. Idly and pertly my thoughts have wandered. But this last expression of them is serious, earnest, and sincere; for it bears to you the assurance of my lasting remembrance and unalterable regard.

Boulogne: Wednesday, April 24, 1826.

My letter (confound the ink!) written from Abbeville has travelled with me here. Having written it too late for the post from that town, and being unwilling that so precious a composition should be lost by the carelessness of any servant to whom I might entrust it, I have brought it hither for the purpose of posting it myself. And to this peregrination you are indebted for the amusement and expense of another sheet.

I accomplished the journey from Abbeville to Boulogne yesterday, to the greater satisfaction of myself than of my horse; who thought sixty miles a day too much for an excursion of pleasure. In point of health I feel not like the same person since I left Paris. As to spirits, they are, at this instant, at a very very low ebb. But there is an inconsistency in the human mind which the fanatic attributes to the superiority of his faith, and the philosopher to that of his system. It is that in all misfortunes and all wretchedness

the soul is to itself a secret support. It finds a strength even in despondency, and opposes to mischance or disappointment an intense concentrated resolution which defies and dares the worst. By men who do not reflect this is called greatness of character. I know it to be nothing but the unbending and unconquerable obstinacy of pride.

When I was stopping to dine at a little inn upon the road hither, the landlady asked me, with a smirk, if I would not like a *dîner à l'anglaise*. Of course, I said Yes. And I was served with . . . soup, and potatoes: dry mutton chops, and potatoes: hard beefsteaks, and potatoes: juiceless chicken, and potatoes: and, last scene of all this strange eventful history, in, after these, came, by way of the most delicate dish of the dessert, centrally situated in the midst of cheese, apples, and walnuts,—potatoes again! Yea, verily, potatoes.

Who would think to find such a touch of satire in Normandy? Or this anecdote in the midst of a sententious epistle from a moralising hypochondriac?

The great sea is before me. I raised my eyes just now, and they rested on its waters. I have ever found in the sense of mystery they excite, a vague, undefined, but *restless* emotion. To me there is nothing soothing in the sight of that dark unsleeping element. The sea and the sky affect me powerfully, but differently, when I observe them with attention. The contemplation of the first always troubles me; that of the second brings to me repose. Each is an emblem—a haunting suggestion—of Eternity. But the eternity which speaks to my imagination in every aspect of the ocean is a tumultuous eternity of doubt, of inquietude, of dread. Gazing upon the heavens to which earth sets no bounds, and through which man has no paths, my feelings grow freer from the agitations, the anxieties, the fears and fevers, of human life; and my soul seems to wander, through serener avenues of thought, towards that everlasting, limitless, unattainable repose which is the spiritual realm of a Divine Presence.

Have I been writing nonsense? Something very like it, I imagine. But I hate your very sensible people. And I, who am always playing the fool in life, may surely do so now and then upon paper. Adieu.

BOOK VI.

UNPROFESSIONAL AUTHORSHIP

(SUPPLEMENTARY)

1826.

CHAPTER I.

'O'NIEL.' 1826. ÆT. 22.

IF coming events ever cast their shadows before upon the mind, the melancholy which pervades the letters written by my father on his way back to England might be regarded as the reflection, rather of a deepening instinct of future trouble, than of any lasting regret for past felicity. For he was now upon the eve of a great change in life: and, as regards the literary results of his life, there is a marked difference to be observed between those which preceded, and those which followed, this change in it.

From the record of his undergraduate days it will have been seen that, before he left Cambridge, he had studied prose composition as an art; that he had tried his hand at fiction as well as criticism; and that he had early formed the habit of making elaborate notes upon his observation of the world around him as well as his study of books. But until he married he was a literary *dilettante*. After that event, and in consequence of it, he became what may fairly be called a professional author; dependent on his pen for nearly the whole of his income; and forced into incessant and systematic literary production by the *res angusta domi* which provides the motive power of so much precious labour in this toilful planet.

The probability of such a necessity had been constantly present to his mind during the months passed by him at Paris and Versailles in 1826; and the unpublished products of that

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time attest the assiduity with which he was already preparing to meet it. This short, but active, period of unprofessional authorship will not be without its interest to those who care to trace, step by step, the gradual development of the author's genius, to understand the conditions of feeling and circumstance under which he worked, and to appreciate the relation of what he wrote to what he read, and what he *lived*. Two of the works begun, and all but completed, before my father left Paris in the first half of the year 1826, were shortly afterwards published. One of them was a poem, 'O'Niel,' the other a prose romance, 'Falkland.' Many other sketches of life and character, written at the same time, were sent to Mr. Colburn, who considered them too slight for publication in a volume by themselves, and recommended the author to bring them out serially in some monthly periodical. Some of them were afterwards worked up into the novel of 'Pelham,' others introduced, at a later period, into 'England and the English,' and the remainder never published.

What other works of a more ambitious character may have been begun at this time, and afterwards discarded as too crude in conception to merit the labour of completion, it is impossible to say; but among several scraps of unfinished stories undoubtedly written in 1826, I find fragments of a tale, which seems to have been planned out for treatment in three volumes, and is called 'Linda, a Romance.' The scene of it is laid in Germany, and both the style and the subject are mystical. There is also, bearing the same date, a short fiction founded on the alleged secrets of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood. It is quite complete, and appears to contain the germ of those ideas which many years later suggested 'Zicci' and finally created 'Zanoni.' Of these manuscripts I need say no more. The poem of 'O'Niel, or the Rebel,' though not published till 1827, was finished early in 1826; and to the same date must be referred the commencement of an unfinished work entitled 'Glenallan.' The scene of this last named story is laid in

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Ireland; the heroine of it is Irish; the subject of it is apparently, and the origin of it undoubtedly, the same as those of the poem, which must have been composed about the same time. Which of the two was produced first I cannot say; but as the novel was never finished, the probability is that it represents the earliest embodiment of the idea common to both. 'O'Niel' and 'Glenallan' were written before the author of them had been in Ireland, and were the direct literary result of his acquaintance with, and interest in, Miss Wheeler. They are his only fictions, in either prose or verse, which are indebted to Ireland for their subject-matter.

To the poem of 'O'Niel,' which my father describes in one of his letters to Mrs. Cunningham as 'full of rebels, banshees, and scaffolds,' he prefixed the following Dedication :—

To * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * [1]

In premising that I have laid in Ireland the scene of the following poem, I give at once the motive and excuse for inscribing my undertaking to you. Do not deceive yourself by imagining that in so doing I intend solely to convey a token of respect and admiration for a single individual. Pardon my want of gallantry in owning a desire to render this idle tribute a testimony of less exclusive devotion. In the single fascination of your beauty, which knows neither an equal nor a fault, in the vivid and various graces of your mind, and in the higher qualities of your heart, you have combined and blended the most prominent characteristics of your countrywomen: and, like those who looked upon the masterpiece of Apelles, I feel that I am yielding my offering of homage to the beauties of a whole nation by rendering it now to the concentrated perfection of ONE.

This Dedication, if the asterisks are replaced by the letters for which they stand, sufficiently reveals that, in the composition of the poem, his heart had directed his pen. In style and sentiment the story is Byronic; but there is in it a fulness and movement of incident, flowing out of

[1] * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
ROSINA WHEELER.

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a distinct variety of dissimilar characters, which are not to be found in Lord Byron's shorter narrative poems. And to this extent it indicates an original dramatic power not yet embodied by him in a dramatic form. 'Give me the character,' said a dramatist, 'and I will find the play.' But character cannot be created by art alone, and the kind of narrative interest which delights us in novels of the highest order is probably more the result of genius than of art. For the plot of a really great fiction is not contrived but created. Its strong situations are not brought about by ingenious combinations of incident, specially invented for the purpose, but by the natural action of strongly-marked characters.

This faculty of imagining characters which create incidents may be detected in the construction of 'O'Niel:' and it was partly owing, perhaps, to the dramatic elements which, for that reason, are to be found in it, though also, no doubt, to the warm reception likely to be given by an American audience to any representation of 'the wrongs of Ireland,' that, many years after its publication, this forgotten poem was disinterred, and a piece founded upon it was placed upon the stage (I believe, effectively) at New York. The poem itself has long been out of print, and I quote from it two short passages as specimens of its style. The first repeats in verse a fancy more prosaically expressed in a letter already printed from the author to Mrs. Cunningham.

> He turn'd, he sat beside his hearth, and view'd
> The fitful fire, that friend of solitude:—
> That strange and mystic spirit, wherein is shown
> Perchance some type or shadow of our own:
> Our own internal agent, which requires,
> Like that, from earth the fuel for its fires;
> Which pours its powers into the meanest things,
> Quickens the senseless block to which it clings,
> Now low, now soaring, now but formed to bless
> With temper'd light, now blasting with excess;

Which warms, pervades, ennobles while it preys
On the dull substance which supplies its blaze,
And when that substance is consumed, O where
Speeds the wild spirit? Answer me, thou Air!

The second passage is one of the many instances of that grateful sentiment which urged my father, in every period of his life, to give literary utterance to the tenderest and most durable of its affections:—

Oh, in our sterner manhood, when no ray
Of earlier sunshine glimmers on our way,
When, girt with sins, and sorrows, and the toil
Of cares that sear the bosom that they soil;
Oh, if there be in Retrospection's chain
One link which knits us with young dreams again,
One thought so sweet we scarcely dare to muse
On all the hoarded raptures it reviews,
Which seems each instant in the backward range
The heart to soften, and its ties to change,
And every spring, untouch'd for years, to move,
It is the memory of a mother's love.

This poem was my father's last indulgence (for some time to come) of that inclination to write verse which is more or less common to all imaginative and emotional natures in early youth. He was already convinced that his ideas, even when most poetic, were not of that kind to which verse is the suitable form of expression; and that if he was to vindicate his vocation as an author it must be through the coarser instrument of prose. He wrote, as we have seen, to Mrs. Cunningham, 'I feel that it is not as a poet I am to fulfil the end of my existence;' and in an unpublished retrospect of his own literary work he speaks to the same effect.

I imagine that, in one respect, the epochs of a literary life resemble those of literature itself. We begin with poetry, and end with prose. The imagination precedes the reason. In nearly all the biographies of literary men we find some proof of this. Few are born

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poets. But most intellectual persons are, in youth, more or less poetical. The born poets retain to the end the first predilections of their genius. But we lesser and harsher natures discover betimes our true vocation. We cease to worship the celestial fire, though we still kindle from its flame the torches which light and guide us to lowlier shrines. For my own part, my first recollections are of poetry: and, ye Nine, with what a quantity of villanous offerings did I frighten you into dismissing so troublesome a votary!

CHAPTER II.

'GLENALLAN.' 1826. ÆT. 22.

THE plot of 'Glenallan' differs (so far as it goes) from that of 'O'Niel' only in the minuteness of detail, and the variety of incident and character, which are more proper to a prose romance than to a poem. Otherwise, the two stories are substantially the same. The general characteristics of Desmond, the hero of the poem, reappear in the character of Ruthven Glenallan, the hero of the novel. Ellen St. Aubyn, the heroine of the novel, is the prose counterpart of Lord Ullen's daughter, the heroine of the poem; and both of them are the literary tributes of a lover to the lady he afterwards married.

The manuscript of 'Glenallan' is not long; and I here subjoin the whole of it. To the imaginary narrator of the tale my father has transferred some characteristics of his own temperament and disposition at the time when it was written, as will be recognised by a reference to his correspondence with Mrs. Cunningham; and his description of the relations between the younger and the elder Glenallan was, to some extent, perhaps, suggested by his recollections of his maternal grandfather, in the days of his childhood. The story is noticeable for the traces it contains of that love of the supernatural which is conspicuous in so many of the later creations of his fancy; but of which little or no indication appears in 'Pelham,' 'The Disowned,' 'Devereux,' 'Paul Clifford,' &c. This sketch is evidence that the feeling had its origin in early life, and probably in childhood, though the development of it in his published writings was reserved for his later productions.

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GLENALLAN.

CHAPTER 1.

I WAS born in the county of ——. After my mother's death, my father, who deeply lamented her loss, resolved to spend the remainder of his life in Ireland. He was the representative, and, with the exception of an only brother, the last of a long line of ancestry; and, unlike most ancient families still existing, the wealth of my father's family was equal to its antiquity. At an early period of life he had established a high reputation in that public career which is the proper sphere of distinction to the rich and the highborn. Men of eager minds, however, should not enter too soon into the world. The more it charms them at first, the more it wearies them at last; hope is chilled by disappointment, magnanimity depressed by a social perspective which artificially lessens even great characters and objects, tedium succeeds to energy, and delight is followed by disgust. At least so thought, and so found, my father before he was thirty; when, at the very zenith of his popular esteem, he retired from public life, to one of his estates in the West of England. It was there, at a neighbouring gentleman's, that he first saw and loved my mother, and it was there that all the latent softness of his nature was called forth.

Men of powerful passions who have passed the spring-time of youth without the excitement of that passion which is the most powerful of all, feel love perhaps with greater tenderness and force when at last it comes upon them. My father and mother had been married for several years; their happiness was only equalled by their affection, and, if anything could weaken the warmth of the thanksgiving my father daily offered to Heaven for the blessings he enjoyed, it was the reflection that there had been born no pledge to their attachment, and no heir to the name and honours of his forefathers. Justly proud of his descent from some of the most illustrious warriors and statesmen of his country, such a reflection might well cast a shade on the otherwise unbroken brightness of his married life. At last, however, in the eighth year of that life, my mother found herself pregnant, and the measure of my father's felicity was complete, as the time of her confinement approached. But on the day when I came into this world to continue the race of the Glenallans, my mother left it, for ever. This stroke fell the

heavier on my father, because in the natural buoyancy of his character, he had never contemplated the possibility of such a calamity. He left England for six years, and travelled over the greater part of Europe. At the end of that time he returned, with the determination to withdraw himself completely from society, and devote all his time and intellect to the education of the son he had so dearly acquired. But as it was impossible for one so distinguished to maintain in his own country the rigid seclusion on which he was resolved, my father decided to fix his future abode in Ireland, upon the estate where his mother was born, and which in her right he inherited.

Though so young at the time of our departure from England, I can well remember many of the incidents of the journey, and never can I forget the evening when our travelling carriage stopped before those moss-grown and gigantic ruins which were the only remnants of the ancient power of the Tyrones.

It needed but a slight portion of my father's wealth to repair the ravages made by time and neglect in this ruined but still massive structure, and my future home soon assumed a more lively appearance. Although my father civilly but coldly declined all intercourse with the neighbouring gentry, the lower orders were always sure of finding a warm hearth and a bounteous board in the princely halls he had restored. His beneficence secured to him the affection of his peasantry, even amidst the perpetual disorders of one of the wildest parts of that unhappy country, and notwithstanding the abhorrence with which the existing Government was regarded by the surrounding population. My father's sole occupation was the management of my education. It was both the employment of his severer hours and the recreation of his lighter moments. He was not satisfied with making me a thorough classical scholar, but was particularly anxious to give me a perfect knowledge of the history and literature of my own country; to enlarge my views by habitual meditation; to make me familiar with the sciences of philosophy and political economy; and, in short, to bring me, as nearly as my abilities would permit, upon a par with himself.

Perhaps in his ardour to make me great, he forgot how necessary it was for my happiness to make me amiable. He suffered me to pay too little attention to the courtesies of society; and, thinking that it was impossible for a gentleman to be anything but a gentleman, he remembered not how many trifles, small in themselves but large in the aggregate, were required to lay a just claim to that distinction.

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From the lessons of my father I used to turn to my private and lonely amusements. I in some degree inherited his aristocratic pride, and preferred even solitude to the intrusive familiarity of the servants and dependents, who were accustomed to join in the rural sports for which I felt no inclination. It was in solitary wanderings over wide and dreary plains, by rapid streams, amongst the ruins of ancient power, beneath the lofty cliffs, and beside the green and solemn waters of the Atlantic, that my mind insensibly assumed its habitual bias, and that my character was first coloured by the sombre hues which ever afterwards imbued it. As there were none to associate with me, my loneliness became my natural companion; my father I seldom saw, except at meals and during the time I was engaged with him in the studies he had appointed for me.

The effect of one great misfortune upon a mind so powerful as his was indeed extraordinary. Although during my mother's life he had given up all political activity, and lived in comparative retirement, yet he was then proud of preserving the ancient and splendid hospitality of the family, and whilst his house was the magnificent resort of all who were distinguished by their rank, their talents or their virtues, I have been told by those who then frequented it, that his own convivial qualities, his wit, his urbanity, his graceful and winning charm of manner were no less admired by his friends than his intellectual powers were respected by his rivals. But during the whole time that I can remember him, his habits were so reserved and unsocial that, but for his unbounded benevolence, he might have passed for an inveterate misanthropist. Although his love for me was certainly the strongest feeling of his heart, yet he never evinced it by an affectionate word or look. His manner was uniformly cold, and somewhat stern, but never harsh. From my earliest infancy I never received from him an unkind word or a reproach; nor did I ever receive from him a caress. In his gifts to me he was liberal to profusion, and as I grew up to manhood a separate suite of rooms and servants were allotted to me, far more numerous and splendid than those with which he himself was contented.

The only servant I ever admitted to familiar intercourse with me was an old man whose character was of a kind to deepen the gloom of those impressions I had already derived from other sources. He was a sort of living chronicle of horrors. He knew about every species of apparition and every kind of supernatural being, whether of Irish, English, or Scottish origin. The wildest tales constructed by the luxuriant genius of German romancers would have been tame

in comparison with those of old Phelim. But of all the fictions he used to narrate, and I to revere as sacred and incontrovertible truths, none delighted me so much as those relating to my own ancestor, Morshed Tyrone, a wizard of such awful power that the spirits of earth, air, and ocean ministered to him as his slaves, and the dead walked restless rounds to perform his bidding. I can remember well how the long winter evenings were spent, by the flickering light of the turf fire, in descriptions of the midnight orgies and revels, held perhaps in the very room where Phelim and I were then sitting. I can remember well the thrilling delight with which I used to watch for the hour when I laid aside what seemed to me the cold and airy beauties of Virgil, or the dry and magisterial philosophy of Seneca (the two books my father at this time most wished me to study), that I might listen to those terrific legends. Well, too, can I remember the not all undelightful fear which crept upon me when they were over, and I was left to the dreary magnificence of my solitary apartment.

As I grew up, so far from discarding or wearing out these impressions, so inconsistent with the ideas of the eighteenth century, they grew with my growth, and strengthened with my strength. In the old library I discovered many treatises on the existence of witchcraft. Some of them went so far as to hint at the means of acquiring that dreadful art without the penalties which superstition has attached to it; others were filled with astrological speculations, and to these treasures, which I carefully removed to my own rooms, I was continually adding every work I could procure upon the subject of my favourite pursuits. Still as I read, the ardour of penetrating further into the mysteries hidden from human eyes so powerfully increased, that at last I used to steal forth on certain nights to the lonesome abodes of the dead; and, amidst the corruption of mortality and the horrors of the charnel, I have sometimes watched till morning for the attainment of frightful secrets from which my mind in its ordinary healthful condition would have shrunk with repugnance.

This unnatural state of mind, however, could not last when nothing sustained it but the chimeras of a disordered imagination; and what perhaps conduced more than anything else to restore me to my senses was a long and violent illness, caused by a severe cold caught in one of my midnight expeditions. During several weeks I was confined to my bed, and then the long dormant kindness of my father's nature seemed to revive. A mother's fondest care could not have surpassed the unceasing vigilance, the anxious tenderness, with

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which he watched and soothed me. He poured forth, for my amusement, the varied stores of a mind rich in the knowledge of men as well as books; and the astonishing fund of information thus lavished for my enjoyment made me conscious of my own mental defects, and anxious to recover the time I had squandered in eccentric reverie. As soon as I was convalescent I fell into a more regular and instructive course of reading: I discarded old Phelim from my confidence, cleared my shelves of their unhallowed lumber, and seemed in a fair way to flow on with the rest of the world's stream in the calm current of ordinary life. Alas, it was not to be!

I have been thus diffuse in the narrative of my earliest years, because it is in that period of life that the character is stamped. It is then we sow the seeds we are to reap hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

I HAD attained my eighteenth year, and was beginning to think it time to mix somewhat more with my equals, when my father sent for me one morning at an hour which was not the usual time for our daily meeting. Since my recovery he had gradually relapsed into his former habits of reserve, although when we were alone his manner was warmer and his conversation more familiar. I was somewhat surprised at the message, but more surprised by the extraordinary agitation in which I found him when I entered his study.

'Redmond,' said he, 'I believe you have never heard me mention my brother. Perhaps you did not know that I had so near a relation. I have learnt to-day that he is dead.' Here my father paused, evidently much affected, and I gained time to recover from my surprise at hearing in the same breath of the existence and death of so close a connection.

'In very early youth,' continued my father, 'an unfortunate quarrel arose between us, partly caused by my brother's change of political party for reasons which I thought either frivolous or mercenary. The breach was widened, however, by a very imprudent marriage on his part, at which my family pride revolted; and he, disgusted at what he deemed (not perhaps unjustly, as I have since imagined) my heartless arrogance, resented so warmly some expressions I had used in the first moment of mortification that he forswore for ever my

friendship and alliance. Thus we parted, never to meet again. He withdrew to France; and from that time to this my information respecting him has been slight and trivial. To-day I received an official letter informing me of his death and enclosing one from himself, in which, after lamenting our long separation, he recommends (and in terms I dare not refuse to comply with) his only son to my care and affection. I shall therefore write at once to this young man, inviting him to Castle Tyrone, and assuring him of my future solicitude. I have sent for you, Redmond, to acquaint you with this decision and to prepare you for a companion about your own age, who will, I trust, relieve the tedium you must often have felt in the unbroken solitude of our lonely life here.' With these words my father dismissed me.

I will pass over my reflections and anticipations, my fears and hopes, in reference to the prospect of this addition to our home life. During the whole morning of the day when our guest was expected, my father was in a state of silent agitation, as unusual to him as it was surprising to me, although I largely shared it. At length the carriage was seen at a distance; it approached, and a young man leapt lightly down from it. My father received him with a warmth quite foreign to the usual coldness of his manner, and entered into a long conversation with him about his own father. During this conversation I employed myself in taking a minute survey of my new acquaintance.

Ruthven Glenallan was in person small, but the proportions of his figure were perfectly symmetrical. He could scarcely be called handsome, but in his dark and dazzling eye, and in his brilliant smile, there was a power greater perhaps than that of beauty. He had been brought up from childhood in the most polished societies of Italy, and the winning grace of Continental manners was visible in all his gestures and expressions. Except my father, I have never known any person with such varied powers of conversation, or so able to charm and dazzle without apparent effort. Yet at times there was in his countenance a strange and sinister expression, which assumed a more suspicious appearance from the sudden and sparkling smiles immediately succeeding it if he thought himself observed. This peculiarity, however, I did not immediately perceive. For the next week we were inseparable. We walked and talked together, we accommodated our dissimilar habits to each other's inclinations, and we seemed to be laying the foundation of a lasting intimacy. Little as my father was accustomed to observe how those around

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him passed their time, he was evidently pleased with our friendship; and one morning, when I went to ask his advice about a course of reading on the commerce and politics of America, he said to me: 'I am much gratified by the affection which you and Ruthven feel for each other; the more so, as I am now convinced of what I have always hoped, that you would be but little affected by the loss of a part of that overflowing wealth which will be yours when I am gone. You are aware that a very small portion of my estate is entailed, and I can therefore, without injury to you, bequeath to Ruthven enough for his future independence. Though his father's fortune was not large, his expenditure almost rivalled that of the foreign princes with whom he associated, and at his death little or nothing could be saved from the wreck of his fortune. The least I can do, therefore, to compensate for any fault I have committed towards my brother will be to give to his son a small moiety from the superfluous riches of my own.' I need not say what was my answer; it was, I hope, what it ought to have been.

CHAPTER III.

After the first novelty of companionship was over, I began to find in my cousin's character much that widely differed from my own ideas of excellence. If I spoke of superior worth, if I praised a lofty thought or a noble action, his usual reply was a smile of contempt, or a cold calculation of its probable motives, which he invariably sought to prove selfish or unworthy. Sometimes he laughed at my notions, as the inexperienced absurdities of a romantic visionary; at other times he startled me with a bold avowal of his own, and they were mostly those I had been taught to abhor in the most cynical literature of France and Italy. I must own, moreover, that I had sometimes the meanness to feel jealous of him. My own character was not formed to be popular. Naturally proud and reserved, and cold in my manners though warm in my feelings, there was in me something repellent, which chilled affection and repressed confidence. But Ruthven was precisely the reverse. Really wrapped in himself, yet by the perpetual courtesy of his manners always appearing to think only of others, he was loved as soon as seen. The largest part of my munificent allowance I gave away in charity; but my charity was always silently and oftenest secretly

bestowed, nor did my manner of giving it ever heighten the value of the gift. Ruthven seldom or never gave, but when he did give, he so managed it that his gift was sure to be known, and the value of it exaggerated, set off as it was by that winning grace so peculiarly his own, and so particularly seductive to our Irish neighbours. His habits also, both of reading and of recreation, widely differed from my own. He was devoted to politics, which to me seemed neither interesting nor amiable, and his amusements were either the sports of the field or the society of the promiscuous admirers, mostly his social inferiors, whom his conviviality of spirit perpetually gathered round him.

I have said that I was jealous of my cousin. Yes, I was jealous of him; but this was perhaps not altogether so unworthy a feeling as it might appear. I could have recognised without irritation the solid superiority of another; I could have admired such superiority even in a declared rival, with feelings, not of jealousy, but of generous emulation; but I could not acknowledge Ruthven as my superior in any quality my character had been trained to admire. I could not but feel that in personal advantages, in depth of information, in abilities natural and acquired, and above all in that region of character which is governed by the heart, any just comparison between us would have been greatly in my favour. Yet he was loved and admired; I was disliked and feared. To a mind ardent in all its emotions, and hearty in all its thoughts, such a reflection could not be but bitterly mortifying. It was a reflection constantly and painfully renewed by the most ordinary events of every day; and the pain of it, which was not wholly selfish, may palliate perhaps, though it cannot condone, the fault I have confessed.

The gradual separation which now began to take place in our pursuits was hastened by Ruthven's adoption of a profession. My father had given him his choice, and promised him assistance in any career he might select; and after a short wavering between a commission in the army and a seat in Parliament, he finally decided upon the latter. My father had three boroughs at his disposal: two of them had been lately given to men of high reputation, and at this time, all of them were filled; but the member for one of them was very old, and labouring under all the infirmities of advanced age. There was therefore every probability that it would soon be vacant, and the expected vacancy was promised to my cousin. After this decision, Ruthven applied himself more ardently than ever to the study of politics. Every branch of law and history

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connected with this great object he pursued with an unwearied attention which scarcely left him an hour at leisure. This intense desire of distinction was decidedly the highest point in his character. In youth, to desire honours is to gain them.

CHAPTER IV.

I RESUMED my former habits of solitude. I had always been more fond of walking than of any other kind of exercise. Accustomed to it from my earliest childhood, and blest by nature with a more than common activity and strength, I would often wander forth, in all varieties of weather, over those dreary and almost uninhabited wastes which tell so sad a tale of the internal condition of Ireland. Unhappy country! whose sons have in all ages, and more especially in ours, been among the brightest ornaments and best supporters of other lands, whilst their own, formed by nature to be so prosperous, has remained in a condition mourned even by the stranger who beholds it.

One morning, tempted by an unusual flow of animal spirits and the beauty of the advancing spring, I prolonged my excursion far beyond its customary limits. I was greatly attracted by the novelty of the scenery which opened around me, and finding myself at the foot of a small hill, I climbed it, for the pleasure of a wider prospect. There was one object in the foreground of the landscape on which I then looked down which immediately and strangely impressed me; but little did I then anticipate the influence it was destined to exert over my future life. This object was a rather large and very ruinous building, which stood utterly alone, upon a dull and shrubless plain. The oasis of desert, islanded in the loveliness of a landscape with which it had no visible relation, looked as though a wicked enchanter had stolen it by night from another and more dismal land, and dropped it where I saw it, to sadden and deform the beauty of the scenery around it; so foreign did it look to the character of the neighbouring country, and so coldly did it seem to cower in the desolation of its own sterility. My imagination tempted me to approach it.

I found the house in a state of even greater dilapidation than had been apparent to my first and more distant view of it. There was no wall or fence to protect it from the encroachment of man or beast. The rank ivy rioted in its broken windows, and troops

of wild thistles crowded its doorless thresholds. At first it seemed to me impossible that such a place could have a human tenant, but presently I perceived a faint smoke rising from a rickety chimney in the shattered roof; and soon afterwards a woman, whose dress and air were evidently not those of a peasant or a pauper, emerged from the crumbling aperture which served as main doorway to the interior of the ruin. She slowly approached the place where I was standing. As she walked, her head was stooped apparently in deep thought, and we were close to each other before she noticed my intrusion. With a respectful gesture I stepped aside to let her pass. She heard my footstep and looked up. Our eyes immediately and involuntarily met.

Could I devote the unremitting labour of a hundred years to the description of the feelings which that momentary look awakened within me, I should fail to express them. Philosophers may deride, and pedants dispute, the magic of those rare moments which reveal to the heart the capacity and the destiny of emotions it has never felt before; but from the first glance of that woman's eye my soul drank inspirations of passion which have influenced my whole life.

The stranger blushed deeply beneath my riveted and ardent gaze; and, slightly returning the involuntary bow which my ignorance of modern etiquette could alone excuse, she passed on with a quickened step. How often have the most momentous events of our future life originated in the most casual and trifling incidents of the passing moment! Ruthven's favourite dog had that day accompanied me in my lonely excursion. He was one of the fiercest of the fierce breed of English terriers; and his indignation being kindled by some mark of disrespect in the behaviour of a small spaniel which was the lady's only companion, he suddenly flew upon the little creature with a force and ferocity from which it was wholly unable to defend itself. My interference with this unequal combat was successfully exerted at the most opportune moment; and I had the happiness of being rewarded for it by a smile, and a voice, of which the memory almost repays me even now for the terrible sufferings I have since undergone.

To those who read the history of my eventful life, I would fain describe, if I could, the surpassing loveliness of that face which has been the star of its fairest hopes, and even in its darkest moments a guiding light, a glory, and a blessing. But the best part of beauty is what no picture can ever express; and if I attempted to portray the beauty of Ellen St. Aubyn, the attempt would be as eternal as my love.

CHAPTER V.

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I took advantage of an opportunity so favourable, to enter into conversation with the fair stranger: a conversation embarrassed only by my habitual reserve. She was too high bred, and too genuinely modest, to repulse my respectful advances. Half an hour's walk brought us to the entrance of a large modern mansion, so completely embosomed in the surrounding woodlands that till then I had not perceived it. By this time I had learned that my fair acquaintance was the daughter of Lord St. Aubyn; that her father was dead; that since his death her mother had settled almost entirely in Ireland, which was her native country; and that Lady St. Aubyn was accustomed to pass half the year in Dublin, and the rest of it at Rose Cliff, the beautiful retreat which then burst into view from the depth of the embowering foliage around it, bright in all the sweetness of the noontide sun. Here I received from my companion a slight but graceful invitation to accompany her into the house, and I gladly accepted it. 'I have brought you,' said Miss St. Aubyn to her mother, 'a treasure from an unknown shore. Let me introduce Mr. Glenallan.' Lady St. Aubyn received me with a charming courtesy which was a pleasant combination of English dignity and Irish cordiality; and in a few moments I found myself in animated conversation with her on the state of the neighbouring country. When at last I rose to take my leave, I was so warmly pressed to stay for dinner, that I felt too pleased and flattered to refuse. Shortly afterwards, some friends who were staying at the house returned from their morning walk, and I was formally introduced to Mrs. M——, Lord and Lady C——, Miss P—— and Lady L——. In the manner of all these new acquaintances I noticed how instantaneously their first scrutinising and somewhat supercilious look at me was changed, on the mention of my name, to one of respectful politeness: so great is the magic of a name, when that name is associated with the importance which society accords to birth and wealth. At dinner I was seated between Miss P—— and Lady C——. To me these ladies then appeared the most uncommon, though I have since discovered that they were the most common, specimens of womankind. Miss P—— was an enthusiastic musician and admirer of poetry, especially the poetry of Scott and Moore. It is a pity that Byron had not then become famous. How she would

have adored him! What her family and fortune were, I cannot exactly say. Both were, I believe, respectable. As for her personal and natural qualities, she was rather pretty, if blue eyes, good teeth, a perpetual smile, and a never-varying red and white, could make her so, in spite of red hair, a short clumsy figure, a broad hand, and a voice which had not a single tone free from affectation. Lady C—— was a fine large woman, highly rouged, and dressed rather more *à la Grecque* than ladies of fifty generally think correct. She spoke with remarkable self-possession; and whether compliments or sarcasm, wit or wisdom, politics or poetry, it was with a voice perfectly unchanging, accompanied by a fixed stare, which, according to the subject discussed, appeared sometimes indecent, sometimes supercilious, always displeasing, and always unfeminine.

These two ladies, however, were just the sort of women best fitted to diminish the embarrassment of a shy and inexperienced young man. They were eternal talkers and loose observers, and my little blunders in established etiquette escaped unheeded. They were not very serious blunders. Although no guests ever joined our family meals at home, the refinement of my father's tastes and habits scrupulously maintained, even in the most careless privacy, all those little forms and customs which exist in well-bred families. Moreover, I was a most miscellaneous reader, and not less familiar with all that class of fiction which paints the manners and habits of society than with the more serious literature of ethics. A good novel should be, and generally is, a magnifying or diminishing glass of life. It may lessen or enlarge what it reflects, but the general features of society are faithfully reproduced by it. If a man reads such works with intelligent interest, he may learn almost as much of the world from his library as from the clubs and drawing-rooms of St. James's.

How often during dinner did my eyes wander to that part of the table where Ellen St. Aubyn was sitting! How intently were they riveted upon her, when her bright cheek was turned away from me, and yet how swiftly were my looks averted when they encountered hers! After the ladies had withdrawn, the conversation was as uninteresting as after-dinner conversation generally is. I took an early opportunity of retreating to the drawing-room to make my adieux, but, with a hospitality truly Irish, I was again pressed to prolong my stay, at least for that night, and to send a servant to Castle Tyrone, with a message informing my father of the cause of my absence.

'Do pray stay,' said Miss P——, 'for I have a great favour to ask of you.'

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'Why should you go?' cried Lady C——.

'What's the matter?' added Lady L——, who was somewhat deaf. 'Surely Mr. Glenallan is not going; the evening is setting in, and see how hard it rains.'

'It will be quite an insult to Rose Cliff,' chimed in Lady St. Aubyn.

To this I could answer nothing, but I looked at Ellen, who blushed as my gaze met hers, and I bowed a delighted assent. The servant was sent, and I remained. The whole of that evening I sat by Ellen, and that evening was therefore one of the happiest of my life.

In the course of our conversation, I asked her who lived in that deserted and ruinous building which had so fortunately attracted my attention.

'It is,' said Ellen, 'the last descendant of one of the oldest and once most powerful families in Ireland; and that house, the only one left of all her ancestral possessions, may give you a good idea of its inmate. She is very old, and apparently very poor; yet she never appears to want, and with all the noble but mistaken pride of high lineage, she would starve rather than accept assistance from anyone not of her own kindred. Her age, her poverty, her loneliness, and something certainly mysterious in her manners and habits, have gained her the reputation of a witch throughout the neighbourhood. When I was quite a child, I found her one morning stretched in a fit, by a well near her house, where I suppose she had gone to draw water. I was fortunate enough to procure assistance in removing her to her own home, where she soon recovered, and ever since that time she has regarded me as an acquaintance, though she is averse to frequent visits, and will never permit me to contribute to her scanty comforts. To-day I visited her for the first time since many weeks, but every time I see her she leaves upon my mind a remarkable and I may almost say a fearful impression.'

I was just going to ask some further questions, for I felt deeply interested in what I had just heard from Miss St. Aubyn, when to my vexation that provoking Miss P—— came up to us and said, 'Dear Mr. Glenallan, now it was so good to stay, because I wished it. Don't be vain at my wishing it, for I am going to tell you why I did. You have read, of course, Scott's beautiful poem of "Rokeby." Well, I am making some drawings descriptive of the most striking scenes in it, but I never can draw figures out of my own head. I must have a model, and I want to paint Bertram and Redmond.

CHAP. II.

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Well, I have been everywhere and looked at everybody to find an appropriate model, and all to no purpose, but when I first saw you, I said to myself, "Oh, he will just do for Bertram," and so, . . . la, thank you, that look is just the thing. Pray keep so. Now don't move a muscle till I get my pencil. Dear, how provoking, if you ain't laughing! Well now, since I saw you talking and laughing so cheerfully with Miss St. Aubyn, I thought you would do for Redmond too, so will you let me have your profile for Bertram, and your front face for Redmond? Thank you! I knew you would. I feared at first it might be rude to ask you, but—

"Despair
Made us dare,"

and I have tried everywhere. First I thought Lord C—— would do, but he is so very pale and thin, and then I thought of Mr. M——, but he is so very red and fat, and then I looked at Colonel B.-E——, but he wears his collars so high that I could see nothing but his nose and eyes, and if I was to take them with that immensity of black hair round them, people would think I had drawn an owl in an ivy bush. Well, you will do very well. With a little management, that is. You must throw your hair off your forehead, and take off your neckcloth for Redmond, and . . . la, if here ain't Lady St. Aubyn coming to ask me to sing. What *shall* I sing? "Young Lochinvar" or "When in death I shall calm recline"?'

I stayed a week at 'Rose Cliff,' and that time was sufficient to attach my heart to Ellen St. Aubyn by the finest and firmest ties of love. She was, indeed, all that was fitted to command the worship of a youthful and ardent enthusiast. Her face, her figure, her temper, her heart,—all were formed in the perfect purity of female loveliness.

CHAPTER VI.

It was in the middle of the day that I took leave of 'Rose Cliff.'

The morning had been wet, but the weather had cleared up by noon, though dark clouds in the distant horizon foreboded a return of storm before night. One of my servants had come with my horses from Castle Tyrone, but I had sent him on before me. Lovers know how sweet is the charm of a solitary ride when solitude

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is peopled with delicious hopes and remembrances that convert it into a paradise. I had not ridden more than three or four miles upon my way when a very heavy shower coming on drove me for refuge to a neighbouring farmhouse. Here I stayed so long that the evening was already far advanced before I recommenced my journey; but the rain had ceased, and the way was too short to make the lateness of the hour a cause of any inconvenience. I was little more than seven miles from home, when my course was crossed and again stopped by a stream which the recent rain had so swollen as to render it perfectly impassable. I knew of a different road, but it was much longer and rather intricate, and the increasing darkness made me very doubtful whether I should succeed in tracing it out. However, there was no alternative. I must proceed or recede, and of course I chose the former. I had gone some distance when the road branched off in three directions, and I left the choice between them to the discretion of my horse. The event proved how mistaken is the notion entertained by some people about the superior sagacity of those animals. Although I put my horse to his fastest speed, the night came upon me, still completely ignorant of my course, and evidently no nearer home than before. Suddenly I heard a noise behind me, and two horsemen dashed by me, without heeding or answering my loud inquiries as to time and place. I felt all my Irish blood boiling in a moment, and resolving to have some more courteous response from these strangers I galloped after them as fast as my horse's weariness would permit.

They had not gone above a hundred yards before they abruptly turned down a narrow lane, the winding of which completely hid them from sight; and while I was deliberating whether I should follow them, down a road evidently out of my way home, I saw a light which, from its bright and steady beam, appeared to proceed from some house, about a mile distant. There I am sure, thought I, of finding either a guide or a lodging, with perhaps the chance of catching those ungallant gentry into the bargain. So, keeping my eye upon the light, and my horse still at a rapid pace, I reached in about ten minutes the door of a small house. The sign-board, hanging over it, indicated that the place was meant for the entertainment of man and beast. I had a faint idea of having seen it before, in my rides and walks, but I took short time to examine its exterior. The door was fast. I could, however, distinctly hear low voices within, but my loud knock was only answered by an instantaneous and profound silence. I twice repeated it without any other

result. My third effort was answered by a voice which asked, 'Who is there?'

'I want,' said I, 'a guide and a lodging; open the door immediately.'

Another silence was followed by a gruff command to go away, and not to disturb honest men, at that time of night.

'Hark you,' said I, 'this house is a public one, for the reception of strangers, and I know there are some in it at this moment. Open the door therefore, or refuse at your peril.'

Another voice now replied with a deep curse, and a third added,

'Let him come in and take the consequences.'

'No,' cried the one who had first spoken, 'he shall not come in.'

Then I cried, 'I will break open the door.' And suiting the action to the word, I placed my shoulder against it with some force.

It immediately gave way. There was a narrow passage between the threshold and the room whence the voices had proceeded.

Immediately on my entrance, a man strode out before the door of this room, and eyed me with a menacing attitude.

'Are you,' said I, quietly, 'the master of the house? If so, I will trouble you to take care of my horse.'

There was an appearance of surprise in the man's countenance. Of this I immediately took advantage, and gently putting him aside, I walked into the room.

I must own that I repented of my temerity on the first view of its interior. In the centre of the apartment there was a large oaken table, around which were seated about twelve or fourteen men. The greater number of them were wrapped up in large cloaks, which, with the addition of slouched hats and muffling handkerchiefs, effectually concealed each man's person. At the head of the table stood, in an angry attitude, one man more closely disguised than the rest, for he wore a black mask; and by his right side sat a woman of advanced age. Her features were the most strikingly commanding I ever saw, and her style of dress, which was somewhat in the Moorish fashion, enhanced their imposing effect. The table was spread with papers, which appeared to have been thrown together in great haste and disorder, probably at the moment of my unexpected intrusion; and before each man was placed a brace of pistols, ready cocked, and a drawn sword.

There was a momentary pause. But the dark disguises of the

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forms around me, the weapons before them, and the lateness of the hour fully proclaimed the unlawful character of their meeting. I felt a strong inclination to retreat from a house where I was evidently no welcome comer. Whether this design appeared in my looks or motion, I cannot say; but, on a sign from him who appeared to be the chief in this unhallowed assembly, a man rose from the table, advanced to the door, bolted and locked it, and quietly returning to his place, laid the key beside his pistols. This I looked upon as a very unfavourable omen; but, resolved, if possible, not to betray my alarm, I turned to the large turf fire, and made some remark on the coldness of the night.

'Was the weather,' said the man at the head of the table, 'the only cause of your trespass upon our society?'

'Sir,' said I, 'if I have intruded upon you and the company of these gentlemen, you will, I trust, excuse me, and believe that my motive was really and solely the wish I expressed before I entered, to obtain a guide to the nearest town. If I am not mistaken, this house is intended to receive all who seek its shelter, but as I cannot conceive that anyone among you is the landlord, will you allow me to look for him, and accept my repeated apologies for having so unintentionally disturbed you? Sir,' I added (turning to the man who had secured the door), 'will you have the goodness to let me through?' And so saying, I walked, with a sort of despair, to the entrance.

'Stay,' cried the chief in a voice of thunder, and pointing one of his pistols towards me, 'If you move one foot further, your blood be on your own head.'

I felt my indignation rise, and not caring to suppress it, 'By what right,' I cried, 'will you or any man detain me? If, as you say, I have intruded on your company, can you with any reason object to my withdrawing from it?'

Before the chief could reply another man rose suddenly from the table. 'Stranger,' said he, 'look around you. Is not one glance sufficient to convince you that you are among those to whom concealment is necessary, and do you think that we will permit you, not only to endanger our lives, but also imperil the salvation of our country? No! I repeat it, no; it is not our lives that we regard, and as for myself, I scorn this vain meanness, of meeting in darkness and disguise, to concert and execute schemes for so noble a purpose as the liberation of our country. Know us for men in whose ears the groans of Ireland have not fallen in vain.

In silence we have seen our constitution insidiously attacked and betrayed. In silence we have submitted to the laws and commands of a tyrannical Government, which grinds us to the dust, while it mocks us with the pretence of friendship and union. In silence we have heard our religion traduced, and seen our nobles robbed of their rights, whilst yet meanly crouching at the court of their conqueror. In the senate of a land not ours, we have no voice to complain, no force to cry for justice. Whilst our rulers boast of tolerance, we are crushed beneath the weight of their bigotry. More than victorious Rome ever imposed upon our tyrants they have inflicted upon us, and all this we have borne, writhing but unresisting. But endurance is exhausted; we can no longer sit helpless in our ruined homes, whilst our dependents, our parents, our wives, our children, are daily and hourly sinking around us, beneath the horrors of famine. They ask us for bread and we have it not to give them; yet though they are perishing beneath our eyes, we will no longer uplift, in the vanity of supplication to our oppressors, hands to which the sword can alone restore the liberties we have lost, and the lives we are losing. There is not one of us here assembled who has not sworn an oath which, if maintained, will liberate his land, but if broken turn against the bosom of its betrayer the swords of his comrades. There is not one of us whose life is not consecrated to the freedom of his country, not one of us who is not ready to shed his blood in that sacred cause. But think not, stranger, that our strength is but the frenzied paroxysm of despair. It is a deeply established and elaborately organised power. At the slightest sign from each one of the men before you, as many thousands are prepared to flock to the standard of Ireland, and when that standard is unfurled, there is not throughout the whole people of this land an honest man whose name will not be enrolled in the ranks that follow it. Our councils are secret, but our cause is sacred. It is sacred because God is the God of mercy and justice, and for justice and for mercy we contend. Yes, although now we assemble in darkness and disguise, ere long the sun of a reviving nation will rise upon the hosts that are gathering in the watches of the night, and the clouds that still obscure its brightness shall be scattered upon the wings of the morning. Such, stranger, are the men in whose presence you stand, and with their fate is linked the fate of Ireland. Judge, then, whether we can suffer you to leave us at the risk of our destruction.'

'No, let him die,' shouted the chief. 'Let him die' echoed

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the voice of every man in the room, and their swords gleamed in the dim light of it.

'Hear me,' I cried, 'hear me first, and then murder me if you will, for I am in your power.'

'Hear him,' said the man, who a few moments before had turned their wrath against me. And at his word every sound died away into silence.

* * * * * * * *

END OF THE MANUSCRIPT OF 'GLENALLAN.'

CHAPTER III.

SKETCHES AND STUDIES. 1826. ÆT. 22–3.

A TRAVELLER in a strange land observes features and aspects of it which custom has rendered unnoticeable to its inhabitants. Things that are to them trivialities are to him discoveries; and, when we read the impressions of our own country or society recorded by an 'intelligent foreigner,' we often find with surprise that the characters and occurrences least significant to ourselves are precisely those which have set him philosophising about us. A young man on his first entry into the world of men and women resembles the traveller in a strange land; and, if he be not only observant but reflective, he, like the intelligent foreigner, instinctively philosophises about them from that wonder of inexperience which is a great stimulant to observation. For we see least what we have oftenest looked at. My father was, by temperament, a keen observer of the world around him. He entered it at a very early age; and, while his impressions of it were still vivid, he made sketches of character, as a tourist makes sketches of scenery. Here is a list of some of these efforts which belong to 1826:—

1. On conversation, and the chief talkers of the day.
2. Love *à la mode*.
3. Hades, or High life below stairs.
4. Sketches of society by a *débutant*.
5. The Correspondence of Muley Eidor Moratcham.
6. Memoirs of a Gentleman.
7. Posthumous letter from the King of the Sandwich Islands.
8. Literary Lions.

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9. On Bores.
10. Social Philosophers.
11. The Age and its worshippers.
12. Typical Characters.

As a specimen of these papers I give an extract from the introduction to the imaginary 'Correspondence of Muley Eidor Moratcham,' which is voluminous and ranges over a wide variety of topics. The general character of its satire upon certain aspects of English manners, customs, and institutions, will be gathered from the passage I quote.

In the year of our Lord 18— a stranger arrived from the East to take up his abode for some months in the metropolis of Great Britain. He was by birth a Persian, and by profession an enthusiastic admirer of the fair sex. In fact, he had undertaken this pilgrimage to the cold shores of liberty and rheumatism mainly for the purpose of admiring those flowers of female beauty which were said to blossom here in great luxuriance. Muley Eidor Moratcham was the name of him. Muley Eidor had been in France, where they had told him he would certainly be stopped by highwaymen on his way from Dover to London. He had consequently furnished himself, his Moorish servant, and his Italian companion, or toad-eater, with twelve pistols, three blunderbusses, and as many swords. Being a Persian of valorous temperament, and accustomed to little skirmishes of this kind, he looked forward with some degree of pleasure to his expected adventures with the knights of the road. But when his post-chaise was rattling past the fourteenth milestone from London, Muley Eidor Moratcham fell into a melancholy reverie.

'By the Holy Prophet!' he exclaimed at length, 'what stupendous liars are the French! We have not yet encountered a single bandit.'

'True,' said the Italian, 'were we in Italy you would be much better off. The Carbonari would prodigiously suit your valour.'

The Moorish servant looked at his master. 'Descendant of Rustam,' said he, 'I think the French were not so far wrong as you suppose.'

'By the great cock of heaven,' exclaimed the Persian, seizing his blunderbuss, 'do you see them coming?'

'No,' replied the Moor. 'They have come, and gone too. For,

with due submission to your wisdom, I think we have already been robbed.'

'How, slave?' cried Muley, clapping one hand on his purse, and the other on a small chest which he held on his lap.

'Do you remember,' said the sapient Moor, 'that each time we stopped on the road, the men in red garments who bestrode the horses of our chariot, flung open the door of it, and demanded our money. We were told that the donation was quite voluntary on our part. But was it? Those knaves were never satisfied with the gift that satisfied us. They demanded more, and their demands were complied with.'

'Ha!' said the Persian moodily, with the air of a man who has been made to recognise an unwelcome truth; 'thy words are the words of wisdom. We have been robbed, like cowardly Greeks, without a shot for it. But by the blood of Rustam——'

'Yea-hup!' cried the first postboy.

'Yea-hup!' echoed the second.

'Coming out,' rejoined the voice of an invisible person; and the chaise made a dead halt at the door of the Red Lion.

'Be ready, comrades!' cried the Persian, wrath in his eye and heroism in his voice. The chaise door was flung open.

'Please to remember the postboys,' said the Pollux in corduroys.

'Now, Ali Abra!' cried the Persian, 'now Giovanni!'

Three blunderbusses, loaded, primed, and cocked, were simultaneously turned upon the corduroys.

'O Lord!' exclaimed the postboy.

'Murder!' yelled his companion.

Away flew the landlord. Off scampered the ostler. Down fell the fat landlady, screaming like a whole flock of geese when a dog presumes to address them.

'By the Prophet,' said Muley Eidor Moratcham, with disdain, 'what dastards! They are not worthy of our vengeance. Let us get out and give up the dogs to the Cadi.'

Forth stepped the victorious Persian, with his blunderbuss still presented to the unfortunate postboys, who were down in the kennel, galloping over the Lord's Prayer as fast as they would have carried a royal duke to Dover.

'Help me, comrades!' said Muley Eidor, gravely seizing one of the postboys by the collar. 'Giovanni, you carry off the other!' And the conquerors, taking their prisoners with them, marched on, over the mountainous landlady, towards the bar.

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'They will make us minced meat!' groaned the elder postboy.

'They will make us bishops,' sobbed the younger.

By this time, however, the Landlord, the Boots, the Head-waiter, the Under-waiter, and the Ostler, having recovered from their first alarm, made a rally, and entered the bar also, in the following order. The Head-waiter, bearing the kitchen poker, went first. The Boots followed, with a rusty broadsword which had served him faithfully in the militia. Next came the Under-waiter with a carving knife. The Ostler backed him up with a pitchfork. And last, like a prudent general, marched the Landlord himself, with a matchless matchlock, which had hung, *in terrorem*, over the kitchen chimney ever since the Red Lion was first whelped.

I ought to have mentioned that Muley Eidor Moratcham had learnt to speak English tolerably well before he came to our country. At least he understood our language better than any Frenchman who has been twenty years learning it. 'Take up these villains,' said he, 'they have attempted to rob us!'

'Oh my eye, what a bouncer!' cried the first postboy, recovering at the sight of his rallied allies.

'A thumper!' echoed the second.

'If so, Mounseer,' said the Landlord, peeping over the Ostler, who peeped over the Under-waiter, who peeped over the Boots, who peeped over the Head-waiter, 'if so, Mounseer, that alters the case. Will you take your Davy to it?'

'I don't understand you,' said the Persian with dignity. 'But no matter. Here they are. Take them. Bastinado them. Give me more horses, and let me go on to London.'

'Well, if ever I heered anythink like it?' said the Head-waiter.

'My stars!' said the Under-waiter.

'Blow me!' said the Boots.

'Bless me!' said the Landlord.

'D—n me!' said the Ostler.

Now the chief of the trencher-scrapers who headed the battalion, and was a sort of John, Duke of Argyll,—

> 'The inn's whole thunder born to wield,
> And shake alike the senate and the field,'

began to understand that there was some misunderstanding. He was a shrewd fellow, and forthwith conducted the Persian and his suite into a private room. There he soon plucked out the heart of their mystery. After which he explained to them the important

distinction between a pad and a postboy. 'Giovanni,' said Muley, walking to his chaise, 'they are not Arabs after all. Heaven have mercy on those lying French when they walk over the last bridge!'

The postboys were satisfied with five shillings a-piece for their fright; and the travellers, without any further adventures, reached the apartments prepared for them in London, at a West End hotel. Prepared for them by whom?

'Patience,' saith the Spanish muleteer to his mule, and the English writer to his reader. I am going to explain.

Our Persian had in some country, no matter where, rendered some service, no matter what, to a young Englishman of good family; and, notwithstanding their differences of faith, they had become sworn friends. The Persian was, to say the truth, supposed by his countrymen to be shamefully indifferent about religious matters. From some persons who, in Persia, called themselves philosophers, he had imbibed the absurd notion that a Jew, a Giaour, even a Christian or a Safi, who had done good to many and harm to none, might be almost as acceptable to Allah as a Mussulman who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca without relieving the wants of a single fellow-creature, or caring for anyone but himself. As for the Englishman, his ideas about religion were simple. He believed that it is right to go to church, especially in the country, and proper to give soup and pudding to the poor at Christmas. He also believed that murder and poaching are great sins. Muley was a regular attendant at the mosque, he was charitable to excess, and he had never committed either murder or poaching. By his English friend he was consequently regarded as a remarkably pious character. A long journey, planned and made in concert, cemented their intimacy; which remained unbroken till the Englishman (Mr. Vavasour Howard) was summoned home by the death of his father, and the acquisition of 12,000*l.* a year.

Muley Eidor Moratcham was a gentleman of actively indolent disposition. His pleasure was to saunter through life from sentiment to sentiment. He consoled himself for the loss of his English companion by lounging through Europe for a year or two, and writing to the prettiest women he met in his travels the prettiest verses in the Persian style. He had one quality, rare in a Mussulman. Some people say they can enjoy walking or riding through woods and fields even without the excitement of killing birds and foxes: and in the same way it pleased Muley Eidor to follow the footsteps and admire the features of beauty without any destructive purpose. He found as

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much pleasure in contemplating the living lineaments of Eve's daughters as an Italian in gazing on the marble goddesses that still consecrate the classic soil of his country, or an Englishman in studying the pedigree and proportions of his racehorses. Thus he had become a perfect connoisseur in every detail of female loveliness; and was, in fact, the first person who discovered that the right hand of the Venus de Medici is too short by a full hair's breadth. All knowledge finds its way at last to our own country: and, when Muley Eidor had seen all that was to be seen, and known all that was to be known, of the women of Greece, Italy, Spain, Germany, and France, it occurred to him that instruction and amusement might be derived from personal investigation on the spot into the truth of a report he had heard in those countries that the women of England surpass all others—in the size of their feet. He therefore accepted from Vavasour Howard an invitation to our celebrated island. Vavasour Howard was a great diner out, and a great talker. Soon, therefore, it was rumoured about London that a young, rich, and handsome Asiatic was come to spend the season in town. 'He is prodigiously fond of you women,' said Vavasour.

'Does he bring his seraglio with him?' asked the handsome Mrs. A——.

'What is the colour of his handkerchief?' sighed Lady Ophelia.

All London was in a tumult.

'He will ride in the Park to-morrow,' said Vavasour, and the Park was as full as a Downing Street drum when the Ministerial majority is doubtful. The Ride was a whispering gallery.

'What o'clock is it? Have you heard when he is to be here?'

'Where is Mr. Vavasour Howard?'

'I wonder what height he is?'

'Do you think he wears a beard?'

'How many wives do they say he has?'

'Has he room for any more?'

'Why you know he's a Mussulman.'

'Oh, mamma, what *is* a Mussulman?'

'But *do* be serious. Is he really so very, *very* rich?'

'Can we get him to Crocky's?'

'Brought over any nice little Arabian tits with him?'

'How is he dressed?'

'Does he look like Othello?'

'Good heavens, there he is!'

'No really, where is he?'

'Ah, how beautiful!'
'Don't see him? That's he.'
'La, how funny!'
'Magnificent man!'
'Superb horse!'
'Queer costume!'
'How droll!'
'How divine!'

The interesting object of these remarks, mounted on a thoroughbred Arab, dressed in the graceful costume of his country, attended by two Oriental servants, and accompanied by Mr. Vavasour Howard, rode slowly through the admiring crowd.

'Your English people are fond of staring,' said he.

'Yes,' replied Vavasour, 'it is their habit to stare at each other in a hot room without saying a word for four hours at a time. But they mean it affectionately, and call it "seeing their friends."'

'Houris and heavens!' exclaimed Muley, 'never did I see eyes by which it was so delightful to be surveyed. Who is that? and that? and that? Ah, I am like the dervish who was permitted by the fairy to see all the wonders of her realm, but not to touch them!'

'Why not?' said Vavasour.

'Bless me,' whispered the pretty Miss May to Lady Evergreen, 'what a look he gave me as he passed! just as if he would like to eat me.'

'Insolent barbarian!' said her companion. 'Is there anything wrong with my turban?'

'Fine beard,' observed Lord Absalon, stroking his own.

'Deuced queer colour though,' said Captain Carrot. 'Tyrian dye, I suppose.'

The charming Lady Dashington beckoned from her carriage. Vavasour Howard rode up to it.

'*Dear* Mr. Vavasour, *can* you bring him to my ball to-morrow? *Do* try!'

'Ah, Lady Dashington!'
'How foolish you are!'
'Then I *shall* see you to-night, after the opera?'
'Oh, Vavasour!'
'Why so cruel to one who adores you?'
'But will you never forsake me?'
'How can you doubt my devotion?'

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'Then I suppose it must be. Insinuating creature! What temptation we poor women are exposed to! But *do* tell me. What is the story about throwing the handkerchief, *and all that*?

'Beautiful Lady Dashington, I will explain it to you this evening most satisfactorily—after the opera. 'Tis the prettiest thing in the world.'

Happy Lady Dashington! her ball was the greatest success of the season. The unfortunate Duchess of Belfont, a rival beauty, had, in the pride of her heart, fixed the same night for a similar entertainment. She had dared to anticipate full rooms for herself and empty ones for the odious Dashington. But alas for the vanity of mortal expectations! No sooner was it rumoured that the dear Persian would be on view at Dashington House than there came, oh, such heaps of excuses from the dearest of friends to the dearest of duchesses. The poor Duchess was seized with an influenza, put off her ball, went to Tonbridge Wells for the recovery of her health, and left the lively Dashington in full possession of the field. Our Persian shone forth like the orb once worshipped by his countrymen. He rose at Dashington House, and careered in glory through the three summer months which compose a London winter. The Grand Seigneur himself, in the bosom of his seraglio, was never so caressed by rival sultanas. Muley Eidor Moratcham grew thinner and thinner as his engagements waxed thicker and thicker: and, at last, having exactly ascertained the number of inches that go to a foot in the fair measurement of the fairest portion of the finest English world, as also the causes which make consumption so common in our country, he packed up all his accoutrements, burnt two-thirds of his voluminous correspondence, took an affectionate leave of Vavasour Howard, and, armed this time with restorative cordials instead of blunderbusses, retraced his way to Dover.

Next to Vavasour I held the most prominent place in his esteem. For I understood the Persian language, and had translated his favourite poems. We talked together about love and literature, Hafiz and Houris. Before he left the country he gave me, with the most flattering expressions of his regard, a huge heap of papers containing his observations on all that had most attracted his attention in England. I found amongst them many choice remarks upon English beauty and English character, and some very curious treatises upon our institutions and manufactures, our morals, manners, and politics. There is one, for instance, upon the Parliament and the Gingerbread, another upon the Spirituous Liquors and

Spiritual Creeds, of England. These manuscripts (originally written, it would appear, for the instruction of one Haroun Hassan of Ispahan) are numerous enough to supply any flourishing cheesemonger with wastepaper for a whole year. I have here translated only a few of them.

A word or two must now be said about the metaphysical studies mentioned by my father in one of his letters to Mrs. Cunningham. All that remains of his notes upon them is too crude and confused to be of any general, or even any biographical, interest without lengthy explanations which would here be out of place. But they were the beginning of a kind of reading to which he frequently returned in later years. Metaphysics and moral science attracted him by their relation to character; of which he was, by disposition as well as profession, an habitual student. I do not think, however, that he sought or discovered in them any other source of serious interest. Goethe found in Spinoza a theory of the universe and man which satisfied his mind to the exclusion of every other philosophy, and indirectly animated his art. Schiller found the same in Kant; George Eliot seems to have found it in Comte; and possibly the animating influence of Mr. Herbert Spencer, or the late Mr. Mill, may hereafter be discovered in some work of imagination not yet written. But my father's creations responded to the guidance of no single philosopher, and contain no artistic illustration of the maxims of any particular school or system of philosophy. His conception of human life, in all its moral and social relations, was derived directly from the empirical observation of life itself; and, although physical science was almost the only department of knowledge from which he was content to remain excluded, he had certainly no great reverence for the metaphysical method as an instrument of inquiry. In short, he regarded the employment of it as a kind of intellectual and by no means profitless gymnastic, rather than as a practical opening into any of the hidden avenues to truth.

BAYER. STAATS-
BIBLIOTHEK
MUENCHEN

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Hume, whose metaphysical essays he read eagerly and carefully at Cambridge, was the one, perhaps, among all the writers of that class who stood highest with him as a thinker.

Though I am myself opposed (he wrote in a letter I once had from him) to Hume's theological conclusions, I do not hesitate to assert of his philosophical scepticism that it was not only pregnant with suggestion but immensely beneficial in its results. He has given to the whole philosophy of Europe a new direction, and to him must be referred, directly or indirectly, every subsequent advance in philosophical speculation.

In the year 1826, however, he was more vividly impressed by the literary merits and knowledge of the world, which he found in Helvetius.

We want (he then wrote to a friend in England) some good translation of the works of Hume's great contemporary. There is this difference between the two. Hume drew his conclusions from his own solitary mind. He had great learning and exquisite taste (for everything but the grand), but he profited little by intercourse with society; little by discussion, argument, and the conflict and comparison of minds. Helvetius, on the contrary, brought to bear upon his book the collected and concentrated wisdom of the deepest thinkers and shrewdest observers in France. It is not a mere philosophical treatise. It is the essence of the philosophy of that day, intensely brooded over by a mind of wonderful power, and then slowly arranged into a system; the thinking of a thousand minds systematised by one.

It is still in the year 1826 that this list of subjects for intended essays appears in one of his note-books:—

1. Perfectibility.
2. Knowledge of the World.
3. The Merits of La Bruyère.
4. Vauvenargues (overrated).
5. Ambition.
6. Early Love.
7. Churchyards.
8. Wit.

9. The Proper Aim of Satire.
10. Wilhelm Meister.
11. The Love of Improving our Fellow Creatures.

CHAP. III.

ÆT. 22-3

None of these essays, I think, were written; but many of the memoranda made for them have been incorporated, more or less, into various works of greater length. Altogether, the note-books of 1826 indicate the direction in which my father's mind was now turning. With the exception of a few desultory remarks on Bentham, all his studies at this time appear to have been purely literary.

Yet even in the pursuit of literature the political bent of his mind was continually revealing itself. Thus, in a 'Sketch of the Progress of English Poetry,' written in 1826,[1] a passing reference to the 'Land of Cockayne' and 'Richard of Alemaigne' (the one an allegorical satire on the luxury of the Church, and the other a ballad written after the battle of Lewes, 1264), suggests the observation that 'these poems are valuable *because they show the temper of the times*;' and forthwith this sketch of the progress of English poetry diverges from its nominal subject into a long political review of the state of England during the thirteenth century. Robert of Gloucester, though his work is of no poetical worth, appears to have been studied with an attention which the student did not consider wasted on '*so minute and accurate a chronicler*.' Robert de Brunne is treated with the same respect on the same ground, whilst Adam Davie is dismissed with the observation that 'his visions in verse are apparently original.' An attempt to analyse the metrical structure of the verse of Langlande is no sooner begun than it gives place to an inquiry pursued, with great vivacity, through nearly forty pages of manuscript, as to '*How far did Chaucer and Langlande contribute by their works to the Reformation in England?*'

The 'Sketch' stops at the reign of Henry VII., and is

[1] From the beginning of the twelfth century to the reign of Henry VII.

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followed by a few incisive notes upon the poets of later times: a laconic record of the author's estimate, at the age of twenty-three, of the various schools of English poetry. In these notes, again, the Elizabethan poets are noticed chiefly in reference to the illustrations found in them of 'the influence of the Reformation upon our imaginative literature;' and indications of the social condition of the country under Mary Tudor are sought from Lord Sackville's gloomy 'Mirror of Magistrates.' Great admiration is expressed of Peele's blank verse. Marlowe '*is in my opinion rather overrated.*' The famous address, however, of Faustus to the image of Helen is much praised; whilst the fine sonority of the verse in Tamberlain is condemned as '*windy turbulence of sound.*' From Shakspeare to Pope the opinions expressed are short and explicit. For instance, Hall, '*a coarse but admirable satirist.*' Donne, '*much inferior.*' Greene, Lodge, Legge, '*very mediocre.*' Jonson, '*stands preeminent.*' Massinger, '*one of the few poets whose writings retain little hold on my memory, although I have read him often; never with much interest.*' Beaumont and Fletcher, '*streams bearing mud and gold mixed in equal proportions.*' Cowley and his followers, '*heroes of conceits and metaphysics.*' Denham, Carew, Waller, '*a purer and more classical school, but without genius.*' Herrick, '*a poet after my own heart: his richness of fancy and exuberance of feeling, delicious.*' Hudibras, '*the one gem amidst the dull grossness and flippant insipidity of the poets of the Restoration.*' Dryden, '*the true English poet. Except in his plays, rough, manly, with a quick and joyous perception of beauty and power.*' Pope, '*has lately added to "the laurels never sure" the honour of Mr. Bowles's abuse; but his versification, though smooth and sweet, wants power, variety, and musical compass.*' Of Gray he says, '*to him the modern school is under unacknowledged obligations. During the next fifty years beauty and melody of versification will be at their height. Opulence, too, of vocabulary. But the rough original stamp of genius in poetry may perhaps be*

lost in the polishing of the metal or the exuberance of the ornament.'

A brief summary of the 'History of Portugal,' which fills a thick quarto of manuscript, was also begun in 1826, and ended in 1827. He seems, from his note-books for these two years, to have gone with care through the 'Persæ' and 'Prometheus' of Æschylus, to have begun the 'Inferno' of Dante, and to have made an elaborate study of the Latin Elegiasts. These habits and methods of note-making he continued throughout his life. Every year widened the range, and ripened the fruits, of his reading. Its recorded accumulations are astonishing. His commonplace books are nearly as voluminous as the whole of his published works. But it was not till a much later period of his literary life that the manifold information he had, at the outset of it, set himself to acquire from books, and then to refashion from his own observation of life and character, became completely assimilated in his mind. It then reproduced itself instinctively in the sort of playful erudition which gives a peculiar flavour to the humour of such works as the Caxton novels.

It was probably this element in them which led Mrs. Southey to say in a letter to the publisher of 'The Caxtons':—'Who is the author of "The Caxtons"? And, as some excuse for my over-curious question, I will add that in reading the series of admirable papers still in course of appearance in Maga, I have been so struck throughout by the similarity (sentiment and style) to the writings of the person I most loved and honoured—the author of "The Doctor,"—that, but for my knowledge that he *did not* write "The Caxtons," and a passage here and there which he *would not* have written, I should have exclaimed over and over again "*This is none other than Robert Southey!*"'

I must confess myself unable to detect in my father's mind or writings any other resemblance to those of Robert Southey than that which is inseparable from the universality

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of study common to the two men. They were both of them not only authors, but also men of letters in the only true sense of that much-abused term. And certainly no other novelist of my father's own age and country has bestowed upon the enrichment and elevation of his art anything like the same opulence of literary knowledge.

She did not wait for him to awake — She 46
hurried ~~Hoo' Hoo~~ Home Hero' the trees —

All ~~——~~ that day She was silent &
the face haunted her like a dream - strange as it may seem
abstracted — She spoke neither to Lady
Morgaret nor to Mrs Dalton of her
adventure - Why! — Is there in our
hearts any prescience of their misfortunes?

On the next day Falkland who had
received & accepted Lady Morgarets
invitation was expected to dinner -
Emily felt a strong & excusable curiosity
to see one of whom she had heard so
many & such contradictory reports —.
She was alone in the Saloon when he
recognized the person
entered) - at the first glance she had met she
by the Lakes on the day before, & she
blushed deeply as she replied to his
salutation - to her great relief Lady
Morgaret & Mrs Dalton entered in a
few minutes - & the Conversation grew
general. — ...

Falkland had lent little of Italian
animation in manner - but
his wit tho' it rarely led to mirth

CHAPTER IV.

'FALKLAND.' 1826. ÆT. 22–3.

THE romance of 'Falkland' was completed in 1826, and published in 1827. It is the only one of my father's works which he composed, from beginning to end, without recourse to the sedative of tobacco: and for this reason its composition was slow and laborious. It was elaborated in the course of solitary rambles about the gardens and forests of Versailles, and there is scarcely a page of it that was not written over and over again. The transfer to paper of the ideas which shaped themselves in the author's mind during those long walks and rides involved a sedentary process almost intolerably irksome to the natural restlessness of his exuberant physical activity. From this restlessness he afterwards found great relief in tobacco-smoking; and from that time forward he was an habitual smoker. 'Falkland' is not a novel, was not meant to be a novel, and ought not to be judged as a novel. It is what in these days would be called 'a study of sentiment;' the history and analysis of an illicit love, treated with an insight into all the gradations of such a passion, which would be surprising in so youthful a writer if juvenile experience was not notoriously richer than that of age in the knowledge of those sentiments which are serious occupations only to the young. The tale of 'Mortimer,' written in the same vein as 'Falkland,' and afterwards developed into 'Pelham,' had been finished in London before my father's second visit to France. Speaking of it in the

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preface to an edition of 'Pelham' published in 1835, he says:—

> Soon afterwards I went abroad. On my return, I sent to Mr. Colburn for publication, a collection of letters which, for various reasons, I afterwards worked up into a fiction, and which (greatly altered from their original form) are now known to the public under the name of 'Falkland.' While correcting the sheets of that tale for the press, I became aware of many of its faults; but it was not till it was fairly before the public that I was sensible of its greatest fault—namely, a sombre colouring of life and the indulgence of a vein of sentiment which, though common enough to all very young minds in their first bitter experience of the disappointments of the world, had certainly ceased to be new in its expression, and had never been true in its philosophy. The effect produced upon my mind by the composition of that work was exactly similar to what Goethe says of the relief given to his thoughts and feelings after he had thrown off the morbid excitement of them in the production of Werther. I had rid my bosom of the perilous stuff. I had confessed my sins and was absolved. I could return to real life and its wholesome objects.

My father subsequently withdrew this book, and not till after his death did it reappear in any edition of his works.[1] His maturer judgment condemned it as a production which, though not immoral in its intention, might have a harmful influence upon the class of readers most likely to be interested by it. It need hardly be said that this was not his opinion when he

[1] The reasons which induced the author's son to restore it to the first posthumous edition of them are thus stated in the preface to the Knebworth edition of *Falkland* (1875):—

> 'Those who read the tale of *Falkland* eight-and-forty years ago have long survived the age when character is influenced by the literature of sentiment. The readers to whom it is now presented are not Lord Lytton's contemporaries; they are his posterity. To them his works have already become classical. It is only upon the minds of the young that works of sentiment have any appreciable moral influence. But the sentiment of each age is peculiar to itself; and the purely moral influence of sentimental fiction seldom survives the age to which it was first addressed. The youngest and most impressionable reader of such works as the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, *Werther*, *The Robbers*, *Corinne*, or *René*, is not now likely to be morally influenced for good or ill, by the perusal of those masterpieces of genius.'

wrote it. He resented the charge of immorality to which it exposed him; and to that charge he made a lengthened reply (now long out of print) which I here condense:—

Two things are to be considered in relation to the morality of a book. 1. The moral maxim it illustrates; which we call the *moral* of it. 2. The moral effect which, on the whole, it is likely to produce; and this we call the *tendency* of it. The two are not inseparable. A book with a good moral may have a most pernicious tendency, and one with an admirable tendency may have a very defective moral. The tales of Marmontel are written for the purpose of illustrating excellent maxims. They have the most immoral tendencies. The plays of Molière illustrate pernicious maxims, but have the most useful and beneficial tendencies.

On both grounds, the charge of immorality is inapplicable to 'Falkland.' The subject of the book is the progress and severe punishment of an unlawful passion. The moral maxim which it illustrates is, therefore. the *punishment of vice*. Is this immoral? But to say that virtue is virtuous, and vice vicious, does not (as La Bruyère observes) make either vice or virtue a whit more acknowledged. The moral maxim of the book is, I admit, useless, if unsupported by its moral tendency.

What is the tendency of 'Falkland'? 'To make vice beautiful,' you say. I reply that this is impossible. We may admire a vicious character but not the vice of it. What do we admire in the Richard III. of Shakespeare? His treachery? his cruelty? his hypocrisy? No, we admire in him only his courage, his wit, his profundity, his genius. These may partly blind us to his vices, but they do not induce us to love them, nor do we esteem the qualities that degrade, but those which redeem, the character. For which reason, I could not have induced, even if I would, any virtuous reader of 'Falkland' to love vice. But I might have endeavoured to render the readers of this book enamoured of a vicious character. Had I done so I should have given to the book a vicious tendency; and yet I should have done no more than has been done before me by Richardson and Le Sage, and Fielding and Scott, and every dramatist. It would still remain a problem whether I had abandoned morality by adhering to nature. But, at the expense of my vanity as an author, I must aver that this I have not done. I say at the expense of my vanity, because it requires a great intellectual exertion on the part of an author

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to render a vicious character really captivating. It is only in the capacity of a lover that the character of Falkland is to be considered in reference to this charge of immorality. As a man, he has much to redeem him from censure; as a lover, absolutely nothing. Selfish, exacting, vain, reckless of the happiness of his mistress, devoted only to the gratification of his own, he possesses all the qualities that most displease us in the character of a lover. So that even in this respect I have not offended, for I have rendered my vicious hero as thoroughly unamiable as I have shown him to be unprosperous; and it is impossible either to sympathise with his character or to commiserate his fate.

What, then, was the purpose of the book? A far wider, and I think a far higher, one than the trite illustration of any moral maxim however excellent. This purpose was to increase the knowledge of our nature by displaying the passions and workings of the heart. It is the observation of a shallow criticism that there is much in the human heart which ought not to be described. But the observation is as untrue of literature as it is of surgery. The physician might as well be forbidden to explore all that is defective in the formation of the body, as the literary student of character to investigate what is vicious in the constitution of the mind. In every department whether of literature or of science, knowledge (whatever be its province or its sphere) is the legitimate aim of our intellect; its acquisition is the best moral we can inculcate, its extension the widest blessing we can bestow. It is *because* it traces the passions and reveals the heart (and not *in spite of* its doing this) that fiction is the noblest vehicle of morality. And therefore it is that the theatre is more potent than the porch, that novelists are more useful than essayists, the poems of Homer more instructive than the hymns of Watts, and the tragedy of Macbeth of greater value than Dr. Gregory's advice to his daughters.

Now, I may have failed in my endeavour to delineate truthfully the passions I have studied to describe. Goodness is so little esteemed in comparison with sense, that the most modest of men may without apology assert the sincerity of his heart, whilst none but an inveterate coxcomb dare insist on the strength of his head. But to have made the attempt in the prosecution of so excellent an object will suffice, in the eyes of the charitable, to excuse some faults; and the least success in such an attempt ought to redeem many. Authors are no more infallible than readers, nor are they better judges of the moral merit of their works. But whatever be

the moral defects in this work of mine, I conscientiously assert that they are not the fruits of an evil intention; and that, in endeavouring to please, I have not studied to pervert.

This *apologia* is a curiously unconscious mixture of truth and fallacy about literature.

During the ten years of authorship which followed the publication of 'Falkland,' the ripening of my father's critical judgment was not less remarkable than the development of his productive power, and in an admirable criticism of the novels of Paul de Kock which he contributed to the 'Edinburgh Review' in 1837, he has himself supplied the answer to what is unsound in this defence of his own first work.

To the novelist (he says in his Edinburgh article) the proper sphere of morality is twofold—that of the effects of the passions on individuals—that of the effect of social circumstance on character. The last is often the most generally salutary, for it seeks to amend not only individuals but society itself. But it is often also the most dangerous. We are not quite sure, for instance, whether novels like 'Tom Jones,' which, in seeking to unmask hypocrisy, lend too great a charm to the errors of a frank and cordial nature, are as safe for young readers—who are rarely Blifils and frequently Joneses—as they may be for sober philosophers who have passed the grand climacteric. The novelist should ever remember that the class he addresses is the very widest an author can command—that it comprehends all dispositions, all ranks, all ages, all countries. He ought to be aware that a fiction can never so thoroughly open all the bearings of a truth, but that a truth itself should be presented to the world with every possible precaution against such one-sided views of it as are ever productive of error. Physical anatomy is a most useful science, but there have been writers who have made anatomy subservient to the grossest impurities. There is a mental anatomy as well as a physical one, by which we may render intellectual instruction a pander to the passions. To be moral is ever to be philosophical; but to be philosophical is not always to be moral.

It was, however, on religious rather than social grounds that this book incurred the disapproval of one whose judgment

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on such a question my father held in higher reverence than that of any other critic. The following letter was written to him by his mother immediately after her perusal of 'Falkland.'

Mrs. Bulwer Lytton to her son.

I cannot wait till I see you, for the expression of my sentiments about 'Falkland.' Yet I know not how to express my astonishment at the really wonderful power of your imagination. In reading a book of this kind one expects to be gratified by sentiments well and gracefully expressed, and by a tale told with interest and pathos. But interested as I was about the *dénouement* of 'Falkland,' almost every page of it has forced me to pause by the way in amazement at the power with which it is written; and I may say that I am still lost in wonder at such a production by so young a man. I cannot better express my ideas about your *exquisite* delineations of character than by comparing them to a beautiful portrait by one of our first masters. So startling is the insight of its whole conception, and so fine the delicate finish of all its details, that your work is, to others of its kind, what one of their masterpieces is to a sign-board daub. Compared with it, they all seem coarse and clumsy, and untrue to nature. Any person who does not feel this must be incapable of feeling the charm of intellectual power; and I don't think any *woman* could read 'Falkland' without being startled by its insight into the innermost nature of a woman's thoughts and feelings. There are some of those feelings, so unlike a man's, which a woman when she feels them most is perhaps least able to express or even understand. But we can all of us tell by instinct or experience, when we read of them in a book, whether its author has truthfully represented and interpreted them. 'Falkland' is certainly the production of an imagination of no common order.

And yet, proud as I am of its being written by you, in one respect it has disappointed and grieved me. Ah, my dear Edward, how delighted I should be to behold in you a champion of Christianity. Of those to whom much is given much is required. You may be sure of that. Consider, dear child, the parable of the talents. When I began this letter I had not read the whole of 'Falkland;' not that part of it where he is in Spain. I have now finished the

book. And oh, what a pity the end of it should not assimilate with the rest! That in that soliloquy of the author's, after Falkland's reflections upon death, so little of the spirit of Christianity should be visible! What impression can these sentiments make upon the mass of your readers? that the author has no belief in a state after death which has any relation to the conduct of life, and that he rejects the religion which commands us to regulate the conduct of life in the faith that it will be judged after death. Certainly too much speculation puzzles and confuses the mind. It is best to love and obey. By seeking fruitless knowledge man lost Paradise, and when, by the aid of such knowledge alone, he sought to reach the heavens, his language was confounded, and the unity of his life dispersed.

My dear Edward, what a different, what a much better, moral you might have given to your book had you only altered the last two pages of it! How I wish I could have seen them in manuscript! What sort of a moral does it contain now? None that points to any reason why a man should greatly care by what road he reaches annihilation. There can be no purpose in life without faith in death, and no moral worth where there is no moral purpose. You paint your hero as superior to the rest of his species. You wish us to recognise his superiority; for you have no right to interest us so powerfully in his feelings and his fate, if they are not those of a person entitled to our admiration or our sympathy. But what does his superiority consist of? And what does it all come to? Presumptuous egotism! selfish vanity in attachments that do no good to their possessor, and do harm to others. Child, this is unworthy of you. Appreciate yourself better. You have a life full of purpose because you have a soul full of power. Why write as if you thought that power could exist without purpose, or purpose without belief? Vain are all the acquirements of learning, vain all the aspirations of genius, if the only superiority they can achieve is a superiority of wretchedness.

In the character which the author of 'Falkland' thought fit to give to his disagreeable hero, religious scepticism was a perfectly natural element. But there was certainly no such scepticism in his own character. Nor is it easy to perceive how the moral of the book could be improved by any alteration in the last two chapters of it, as suggested in this letter. To the sanctity of social conventions, Fiction can

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only do homage by the employment of other conventions prescribed by art for the regulation of its own conduct; and the miscarriage of 'poetical justice' (itself a supreme convention) cannot properly be imputed to any work of imagination which fulfils that established condition. Morality would seem to be sufficiently observed in the conduct of this fiction by the prompt and terrible punishment of its hero and heroine for their moral aberrations. To have made Falkland, on his deathbed, a model of Christian faith and penitence, dying happy and calm 'in the confident expectation of a glorious resurrection,' would have been, not an improvement in the moral of the book, but an unpardonable outrage upon the moral sense of its least fastidious readers. Nor would it have been less revolting had the author himself attempted to preach, over the dead body of his hero, an orthodox sermon on the text that virtue is better than vice. All such inappropriate sermonising in the delineation of sexual sentiment and passion is an intellectual sin committed in a province of the emotions so close to that of ethics, that the violation of the æsthetic proprieties destroys all confidence in the ethical sense of the author who commits it. It is the great and unpardonable defect of the 'Nouvelle Héloïse.'

But the immoral influence attributed, or attributable, to works of this description, has its sources, not in the incidents they describe, but in the sentiments they excite. If, as a matter of fact, young and impressionable readers are induced by the perusal of them to rebel against the established code of domestic morals, then the strength of the inducement will probably be in proportion to the truth and power with which sentiment and passion are represented in such works as what they actually are; tremendous realities in human life, and especially in the life of the young. In that case, the greater the merit of the book, regarded as a work of art or genius, the worse is the mischief it may do. This consideration presents itself under different aspects to the politician and the

poet. The author of 'Falkland' was both; and his sense of literary responsibility increased with his increasing consciousness of literary influence. He had, at all times, a strong faith in the influence of literature upon popular sentiment, and of popular sentiment upon national institutions. He watched with the interest of a politician the experiment of middle-class government in France, and read with the appreciation of a poet the magnificent imaginative literature which renders the reign of Louis Philippe one of the most brilliant epochs in the intellectual history of the French nation. But, as his political judgment matured, he could not fail to perceive that the pervading sentiment of that literature must sooner or later prove fatal to the duration of a middle-class monarchy.

No political system based on the ascendency of the middle classes can have any stronger foundation than the respect shown by those classes themselves to the principles and sentiments which constitute the very essence of their own respectability. What a middle class must represent in any community of which it is the governing power, has been truly and tersely defined by M. Guizot, speaking on its behalf as the Minister of the French Bourgeoisie. *L'Esprit de famille, l'empire des sentiments et des mœurs domestiques*, these must guide the policy and animate the example of a ruling middle class. From the moment in which such a class ceases to reverence the presiding sanctities of social order, or begins to welcome, as liberal and enlightened, notions that assail them, its political ascendency is doomed.

But the common characteristic of all the imaginative writers most studied and extolled by the French Bourgeoisie during its brief political supremacy was undisguised contempt of every principle and sentiment essential to the preservation of that supremacy. In their works the betrayed husband figures as a fool or a brute; the faithless wife as a suffering angel; the adulterer as her legitimate champion. They portray the convict as a prodigy of natural goodness

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spoiled by vicious institutions; the priest as an impostor; the noble as a blackleg; the trader as a knave; the working man as the sole possible regenerator of a society thoroughly corrupted by property, law, and religion.

Now my father entered public life full of faith and hope in the stability of the new constitution given to England by the Reform Bill of 1832. But the Orleans monarchy of 1830 was not more substantially the coronation of the French middle classes than the Reform Bill of 1832 was the investment of the English middle classes with a very preponderant power in the State. The whole literature of the Victorian age has been a literature addressed mainly to an upper middle-class public; and my father, when, in later life, he began to review his own contributions to it, was scrupulously anxious that their influence should be, if possible, conducive, but in no case prejudicial, to the healthy condition of a society in which the satisfactory duration of representative government had become increasingly dependent on the social virtues, intelligence, and courage of the middle class. Hence the suppression of 'Falkland.'

The book, when first published, was almost unnoticed by the press. After the publication of 'Eugene Aram,' however, it was, to use the expression of one of its American reviewers, 'resuscitated by the success of its younger brothers,' and involved in the indiscriminate abuse then freely poured out upon them all by their English critics. It was, said those critics, 'pernicious without being entertaining,' 'dull from the paucity of its incidents,'[1] and 'deprived of all pretension to be an instructive performance by its unjust and heartless views of human nature.' It is curious to contrast with these unqualified utterances the opinions expressed, at the same time, by the German critics. In a very elaborate

[1] Of this 'dull' book Lady Blessington says in one of her letters to its author: 'At Paris in 1830, during the very heat of the Revolution, when balls were striking against the walls of my dwelling, I forgot all danger while reading "Falkland."'

and careful examination of the author's genius and place in European literature, Dr. Wolfgang Menzel, the historian, observed:

Of all Mr. Bulwer's works I think 'Falkland' one of the most admirable. The story of it is simple, and the incidents of the most ordinary character; but with what genius is it treated! Falkland is neither a Lovelace nor a Werther, but a combination of both. To some extent this combination exists in all men: and to that extent Falkland is more natural than either Werther or Lovelace. In treating subjects of this kind, German and Italian writers lay most stress on the passionate, French writers on the cynical, side of the matter. Our Englishman unites in himself the two aspects of it, and in each he is perfectly natural; for who can fix the boundaries between affection and passion? The exquisite womanliness of the heroine is portrayed by a master hand. No writers succeed so well as the English in depicting the soft and lovely elements of female character. Compared with the heroines of the English novelists those of the French seem mere coquettes, and those of the German silly provincial schoolgirls. But in this Bulwer stands unrivalled, even amongst his countrymen. More than any other modern novel 'Falkland' resembles the 'Orphelins' of the younger Crébillon: not in its construction but in its truth to nature. The respective heroines of these two fictions are perfectly different, but they feel and act similarly under the influence of the same passion. And this, because they are true women, and because, in each case, the working of that passion is described by an author who understands it. Love's riddle is simple enough; but how few are the writers about love who are able to read it! 'Falkland,' like all Bulwer's works, is remarkable for its background.

Dr. Menzel's criticism concludes with an analysis of the art by which the character of the scenery is made to assist the interpretation of the sentiment in 'Falkland.'[1]

In this thoughtful and admirably written work (said another German critic in 1831) the author shows himself to be no less excellent as a psychologist than he is in his other novels as a painter of manners. The task he has here undertaken is to lay bare, in all its workings, the morbid self-torturing temperament of those unhappy

[1] *Morgenblatt*, 1832.

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persons who are, as it were, the busybodies of their own natures. They are always prying into the secrets of their own hearts, and denouncing themselves to themselves. Yet, after suffering causeless self-reproach about trifles, they end at last by becoming the unconscious deceivers and betrayers of the very ideals they have so fastidiously worshipped. The author has admirably depicted such a character, with the evident intention of showing us that it is precisely men of this over-philosophically virtuous disposition who put themselves in the greatest danger of falling into some unatonable sin; because by their habit of morbid self-inspection they have gradually undermined the natural instinctive perceptions of right and wrong. The story of 'Falkland' is managed with great simplicity and truth. Ordinary events lead naturally up to the tragic catastrophe. The concluding scenes are extremely vivid and touching. The *dénouement*, and, indeed, the whole conduct of the narrative, are the productions of a singularly observant, thoughtful, and penetrative mind. The characters are firmly drawn and forcibly felt. The incidents, though few and simple, are well conceived and arranged for the peculiar purpose of the tale. The whole subject is treated in perfect taste; and a powerfully impressive effect is gradually produced by a skilful succession of light and delicate touches.[1]

The same estimate of a work unanimously declared by its English reviewers to be 'pernicious,' 'uninstructive,' and 'unentertaining,' was expressed much about the same time by a third German critic.

It is (he observed) only towards the end of the book that the external movement of the story becomes animated, and yet from beginning to end no part of it is monotonous. The greater part of it is told by means of letters and diaries. Apart from the principal actors and their adventures there are few characters, and fewer incidents. But nevertheless the book abounds in richly varied interest, created by the vividness with which the feelings described in it pass quite naturally from one phase into another, and by the remarks of a writer who not only sees into the secretest depths of the human heart, but who understands clearly, and feels deeply, what he sees. Since 'Falkland' was written its author has gained in power of invention and breadth of humour. His grouping is fuller, his colouring more brilliant. But in insight and sympathy, in

[1] *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, 1831.

nobleness and tenderness of spirit, this, his earliest work, still remains unsurpassed by any of his later writings.[1]

It is not because they are eulogistic that I have thought it worth while to introduce into my father's biography these few extracts from the earliest German criticisms of his first work. I place them here, partly because they are the only criticisms of the work in which there is evidence of a desire to understand the purpose, and examine the art, of it; but mainly because they illustrate a conspicuous condition of the literary life I am recording—a condition likely to claim reiterated notice in the course of my record.

The literature of contemporary criticism is, in all countries and ages, ephemeral and soon forgotten. Those who now read the novels of Fielding, Richardson, Smollett, or Scott, neither read nor care to read what was written about them by the reviewers of their own time; and we may be sure that, if the writings of to-day find any place in the literature of to-morrow, it will be a place wholly unpenetrated by the critical jurisdiction of yesterday. But when the influence of an original writer has been extended during his lifetime beyond the limits of his own country, it is already on its way beyond the limits of his own age: and it is in the impressions made by his works upon contemporary critics not in his own but in other countries, that he is most likely to find some indication of the probable character of his permanent place in general literature. This happens, I think, from two causes. In the first place, almost every original writer has some mannerisms or tricks of style which, as they lie on the surface of his work, are what strike most quickly the notice of those who read it in his own language and country. The degree of pleasure or displeasure excited in local literary coteries by these superficial idiosyncrasies is generally out of all proportion to their relative importance in reference to the intrinsic merits or defects of the work. But that part of a book which best stands and

[1] *Allgemeine Litteratur-Zeitung.* Jena: 1830.

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oftenest survives the test of translation is the mind that is in it—the thoughts, the ideas, the sentiments, or the knowledge, it is capable of conveying to other minds. And, as these are of the very essence of the book, it is upon their character that its permanent interest mainly depends.[1] In the next place, the foreign critics of a book or a writer, though sometimes influenced by national prejudices, and even animosities, can rarely be subject to the smaller political or personal sentiments which do, more or less unconsciously, influence the whole tone of an author's contemporary critics in his own country; especially in a country like ours where political activity is so extensive and incessant, that almost every department of intellectual work is to some extent invaded by the influence of political party, and every writer discussed in relation to his actual or possible influence upon ideas which are in some way or other connected with conflicting political principles.[2]

[1] 'Authority,' says Hume, 'or prejudice, may give a temporary vogue to a bad poet or orator; but his reputation will never be durable or general. When his compositions are examined by posterity, or by foreigners, the enchantment is dissipated, and his faults appear in their true colours. On the contrary, a real genius, the longer his works endure, and the more wide they are spread, the more sincere is the admiration which he meets with. Envy and jealousy have too much place in a narrow circle; and even familiar acquaintance with his person may diminish the applause due to his performances.'—*Essay* xxiii.: On the Standard of Taste.

[2] Prince Puckler-Muskau was an intelligent, and not unkindly, observer of English society. He had excellent opportunities of studying it in its most favourable aspects; and no feature of it appears to have more surprised him than the inability or disinclination of its leading members to think and judge for themselves in matters relating to religion, politics, literature, and individual character. 'An Englishman,' he says, 'is much less guided by his own observation than is generally imagined. He always attaches himself to some party with whose eyes he sees.'—*Letters by a German Prince*, vol. i. p. 167.

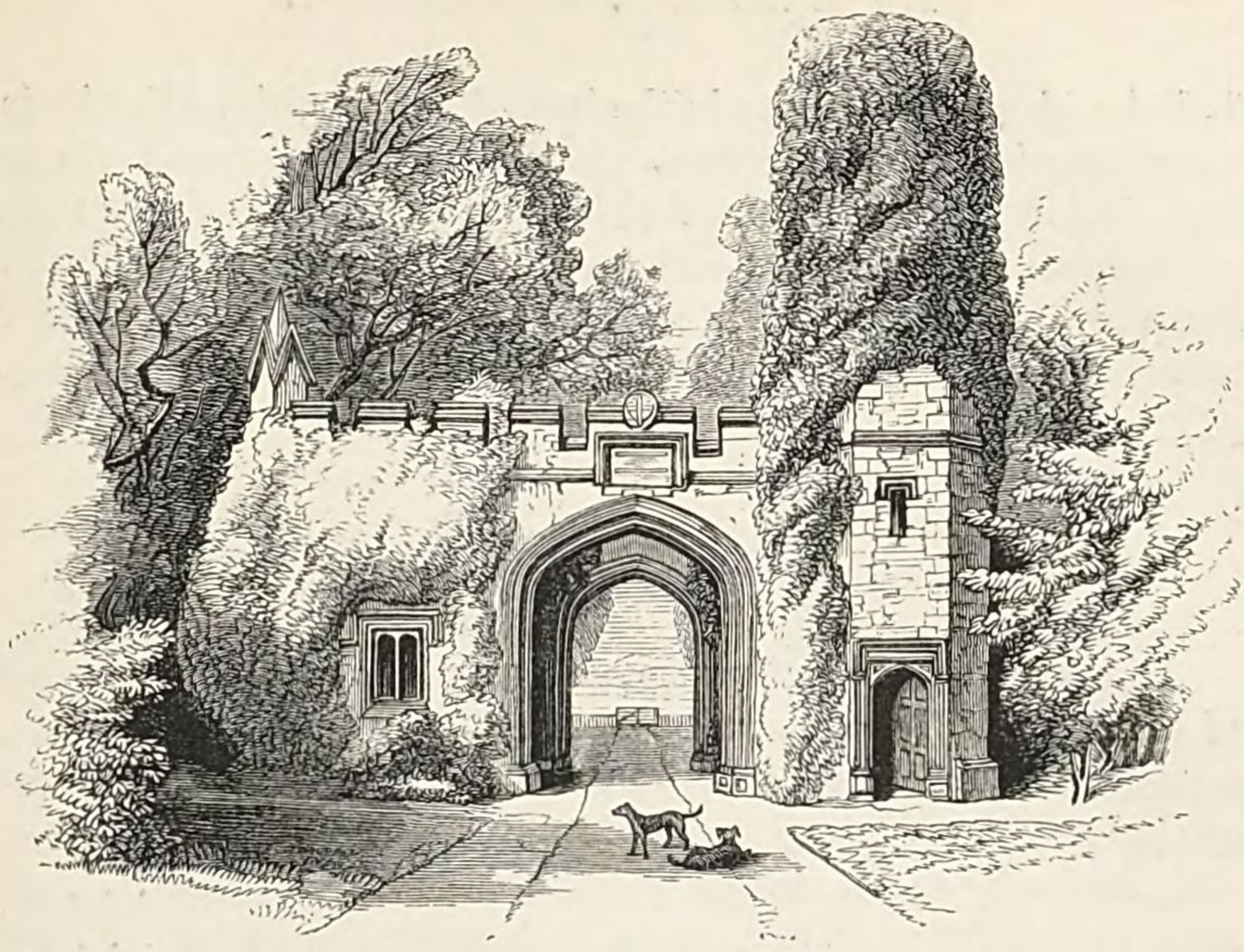
BOOK VII.

MATRIMONY

AND

PROFESSIONAL AUTHORSHIP

1826—1831



GATEWAY, KNEBWORTH PARK.

CHAPTER I.

My father's return to England, hastened by news of Miss Wheeler's ill health, was followed by a renewal of his intercourse with her. But not immediately: and his letters in the interval reveal both the uncertainty of his circumstances and the increasing dejection of his spirits.

Edward Bulwer to Mrs. Cunningham.

5 Upper Seymour Street: April 30, 1826.

Your letter reached me yesterday. I can only give it a short and hurried answer, as I am on the eve of leaving London. I am going into Hampshire, and shall afterwards throw myself into the Isle of Wight, or perhaps Jersey, for a month or two. Things are still undecided, though going on better than I had foreboded. In other respects I have much to harass and vex me. But—

'Come storm, come wrack,
At least we'll die with harness on our back.'

Or, in sober and less hyperbolical phrase, when all else fails us we

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find the friend of adversity in the best of our faculties—Fortitude. Your letter is somewhat frozen. But I know that beneath the ice there is a living current, and that it flows over a sand of gold; and so I content myself, and wait patiently for the next sunbeam. From my retreat you shall hear of me again. My health is wonderfully improved; but I was never so completely broken and disappointed in mind.

The Same to the Same.

Athenæum Club: May 8, 1826.

I am returned to London for two days only, and I take advantage of them to thank you for your letter, and give you some account of myself. I am still free—at least I may so call myself. But do not congratulate me. The thought of it gives me no pleasure. I cannot sufficiently express to you my admiration, my depth of . . . not love, for it is a nobler, and even a tenderer sentiment for . . . you know whom.[1] And yet I am wretched, and scarcely know what I am writing. Well, it is idle to complain. I will turn from this subject to some other. What shall it be? London? Town is to me as it is always. People in good society find it full and call it gay; people in the second set say it is dull. I have been nowhere, but once to—— It matters not where. All was music, and dancing, and ennui. I went there, not from choice but to see some one; and I could not see that person for hours. But I saw instead, S——; he was walking up and down, all curl and complacency; as fat and foolish as ever. I also saw W—— and asked him about Lady A—— The poor little man was quite frightened.

Is there anything else to tell you? No. Write to me one word about yourself. I cannot say that the road of the passions has conducted me to wisdom; and I believe you will find more wisdom in P—— than in me. It does not do, therefore, for me to talk of advice. But if there be anything in which such a sincere, unbiassed, disinterested, person who has outlived the ordinary springs of fear and selfishness which influence most men's opinions,—if there be anything in which such a person can serve you—need that person tell you of the pleasure it would give him? I have for years laid down one principle. I laid it down when I found how the heart hardened with years, and the petrifying customs of the world—that, whenever a feeling wholly selfish comes upon me, I will root it out and destroy

[1] Rosina Wheeler.

it immediately, whatever be the loss to myself. And from this resolution no sophistry shall deter, no blinding self-partiality delude, me. I do not speak of it from the desire of arrogating merit to myself. Heaven knows I have little wish to appear, even in your eyes, better than I am. But I say it in reference to something which has just occurred, and which deprives me, in all probability for years, of that refuge from reflection which it is peculiar to us men to seek in public life. I had long wished to represent in Parliament the chief town of my own county. Peculiar circumstances had secured its leading influence to the fulfilment of this wish. But directly I arrived in England I found that during my absence in France, I had been supplanted by the use made of letters and introductions I myself had given to another. This had been done from want of thought, not with any treacherous intention. Three words from me would at once have restored my claims and prospects. But five minutes' reflection sufficed to convince me that the utterance of them would be irreconcilable with my established rule. I not only expressed my satisfaction at the success which involved the renunciation of my long-formed plans and most cherished wishes, but, except from yourself, I have concealed the disappointment it costs me. That disappointment, however, is a keen one; for just now I had special cause for wishing to forget myself awhile in the new activities of a political life. However, I shall return to the country, bury myself among my books and papers, and turn from thoughts of the future, which we know not, to study of the past; which, perhaps, we cannot know too well. You tell me I am ambitious; but, at least, when ambition is weighed with those feelings which spring not from the scheming brain but the unpolluted heart, may it ever be with me 'as dust in the balance.' Farewell! and believe me, as said my own gallant forefather, Lord Falkland, 'that this comes from a true hand, and a loyal heart.'

To his correspondent the melancholy tone of this letter must have seemed without adequate cause in the apparent conditions and prospects of his life.

Do not (she replied) so bitterly regret your disappointment about Parliament. It is not yet time for you to become a statesman; you are only [1] twenty-one. Go abroad, see Italy, freeze your too warm passions on Mont Blanc, or attempt the Jungfrau. All this, and much

[1] He was then nearly twenty-three.

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more, you have time to do. And yet, my dear little man, you will only then have arrived at the years of juvenile discretion. You will not know mankind better; for that divine puzzle requires years of experience before we even begin to find it out. But you must begin. And your great intellect will not help you much in that study. The one key-note is *self*; and it is sounded in every clime, in every tongue. In love, in hate, wherever you go you may trace it; and if you wish to rule others, you must make use of it. There is a lesson for you!

But it was no fanciful trouble that pursued my father from the spring to the autumn of 1826. He would probably have been better able to conquer his feelings for Miss Wheeler, had they been more emotional and more imaginative. What disarmed him was the seeming sobriety of the tenacious affection she had inspired. This threw him off his guard, because it appealed to his heart in a character that had little of the semblance of passion, and much of the appearance of duty. The thought of her attachment to him kept alive his love for her, by investing it with the fascinations of a self-sacrificing sentiment, whilst it infused some aspect of selfishness into every consideration that could fortify his endeavour to resist it. But there was still no prospect of his mother's assent to his marriage: and to marry, not only without her assent, but in the teeth of her strongly expressed disapproval, was a step from which he might well shrink, without reference to its effect upon his worldly prospects, even had his promise not been pledged to refrain from it. His situation, therefore, while he continued to avoid Miss Wheeler without being able to forget her, was every way painful. It left him no peace of mind, no pleasure in society, and no possibility of fruitful intellectual occupation. He seems to have passed the early part of this year between fits of feverish study and lonely desultory excursions; roaming about the country on foot or on horseback, and resting long nowhere. This depressed and agitated state of mind is reflected in the letters he wrote to Mrs. Cunningham from Knebworth in the months of May and June.

Edward Bulwer to Mrs. Cunningham.

Knebworth: May, 1826.

Confess that I am a better correspondent than you. Your letter, long delayed, has come at last. I answer it by return of post. That, indeed, is a habit I generally adhere to, in order to save myself from the ill consequences of negligence, which my repugnance to letter-writing might otherwise bring upon me. Such consequences, however, I do not expect in my correspondence with you; because my antipathy to letter-writing in general is overcome by my affection in your particular instance. I agree with you in the opinion that we grow more wicked as we grow more old:—

'With each year's decay
Fades, leaf by leaf, the heart's young bloom away.
The thoughts most cherish'd darken from the breast,
And virtue grows less beautiful. We rest
Not on ourselves, but others: and we shroud
The lofty thoughts too sacred for the crowd,
And bend to their low level,—till the long
And gathering custom knits us with the throng.
Passion, nor feeling, nor the warmer springs
Which move mankind to high imaginings,
Have aught in common with the world. We grow
Too cold for transport, too obtuse for woe;
And, still as years come o'er us, vainer seem
Love's boyish hope, and manhood's patriot dream.
Day after day the spirit turns the more
From thoughts and ties it fondly sought before,
Till, to all other interests callous grown,
It shrinks, and cramps, and grapples to its own.'[1]

So much for poetry. But before I quit the subject of it, let me remind you that you promised me my character in verse. If it be too severe, and for that reason you will not send it me, make it up at least by the same quantity of verses upon some other subject. I will not let you off a line. Your verses are too good to be lost, though your promises are faithless enough to be broken. I, *also*, am a foe to population, as exemplified in poor P——'s case. But when Irishmen and Irishwomen do get together without quarrelling, by the Lord Harry, it is a good thing for the midwife! Mr. Malthus

[1] These rough lines, somewhat smoothed and strengthened, were embodied in the poem of *O'Niel*; the greater part of which was completed at Versailles, before the date of this letter.

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and Mr. Mill, who have a great dread that some ten thousand years hence we shall be so numerous as to eat one another, for want of anything else to eat, say very solemnly that the only way to prevent this evil is to educate the children of the poor; and that, in proportion to the prudence thus instilled into them, they will despise the folly of propagation. Alas! it will be a sad time for the young folks in the month of May when Messrs. Mill and Malthus have made the world prudent. I wonder, by the by, what Mrs. Malthus says of the system. Perhaps she says, as everyone says of Political Economy in general, 'Tis all very well in *theory*, but when you come to *practice* . . . !' However, joking apart, I promise you that, as soon as I get into the House, I will do all I can against population. This subject brings me to that of Parliament. My two brothers are already canvassing, so that next year I hope I shall never want for a *frank*. But as for myself, . . . well, the King's health makes the duration of the present Parliament so uncertain, that for the next two or three years I shall devote all my time and efforts to the acquisition of a literary reputation. Afterwards, *nous verrons*. In all things, my favourite motto is that of Sir Philip Sidney (I will give it you in English, though it is only forcible in Latin), 'I will either find my road, or make it.' I cannot help feeling amused by our contest as to which of us has the pre-eminence in misfortune. If I say I am unhappy, your answer is, invariably, 'But, my dear Mr. Bulwer, I am much more so.' This assertion, I assure you, I am perfectly disposed to deny. It is somewhat strange that Misery should be a mistress of whose possession one is jealous; and that we should be loth to acknowledge a superior, even in misfortune. Perhaps there is a secret pride, unknown to ourselves, in being unhappy. But the human heart is so dark and intricate a labyrinth, that if, for one moment, we discover the clue through it, the next moment it drops from our grasp, as we stumble against some erroneous conclusion which it has not helped us to avoid: and we are eventually led back to the threshold of our knowledge by the reflection that we have taken the most prolix and pompous method of discovering our ignorance.

The promised sketch of his 'character in verse,' for which he asks in this letter, arrived in due time, and elicited the following acknowledgment:—

CHAP. I.

ÆT. 23

Edward Bulwer to Mrs. Cunningham.

Knebworth: June 25, 1826.

My dear Friend,—In the first place, I have chosen the very thinnest paper I could find, in order to subject you to the least tax on your reception of my letters: nor, in this selection, have I been altogether without the hope that the thinness of the paper might be emblematic of myself, recalling past associations by a present tenuity appropriate to the subject of them. In the second place, your beautiful verses——. There, now, my pen has stopped at the word verses for five minutes, in order to give me time for words to express how sensibly I was touched and affected, not so much by the compliment your lines convey, flattering and exaggerated though it be, as by the good opinion of me which your sincerity teaches me to believe you entertain. From praise there is this advantage to be derived: we seek to deserve it. And to the grace and elegance of *your* praise there is only one answer to be made, and from it only one conclusion to be drawn.

'They best can give it who deserve it best.'

H—— has lost his election by letting sixty voters be decoyed from him, notwithstanding *their* promise to vote, and *his* to pay. I pity him. And this brings me to a remark I here submit to your knowledge of the world (which, by the by, is always differing from mine). This remark is, that *very clever people indeed* always have *the most common sense*: *moderately* clever people, the *least*. No, you won't allow it?—neither will the world in general. But I, who claim the right divine to differ from everybody else, assert it is a truism.

My dear friend, reconcile yourself with things as they are. You complain of them. Perhaps you are but too right. Yet you bear them also, and you bear them well. I pity, but (what does not often accompany compassion) I admire you more. I have just cast my eyes over this page. Alas! my dear friend, whatever else Providence may have intended us to be, it never meant either of us to become writing-masters.

I have been at Knebworth the greater part of the time I have now wasted in England—that land of wealth and rheumatism, corruption, vulgarity, and flannel waistcoats. I have been at Knebworth, I say: and would that you could have seen me there, surrounded by books and papers, and dreaming, like the parson in Boileau, in a

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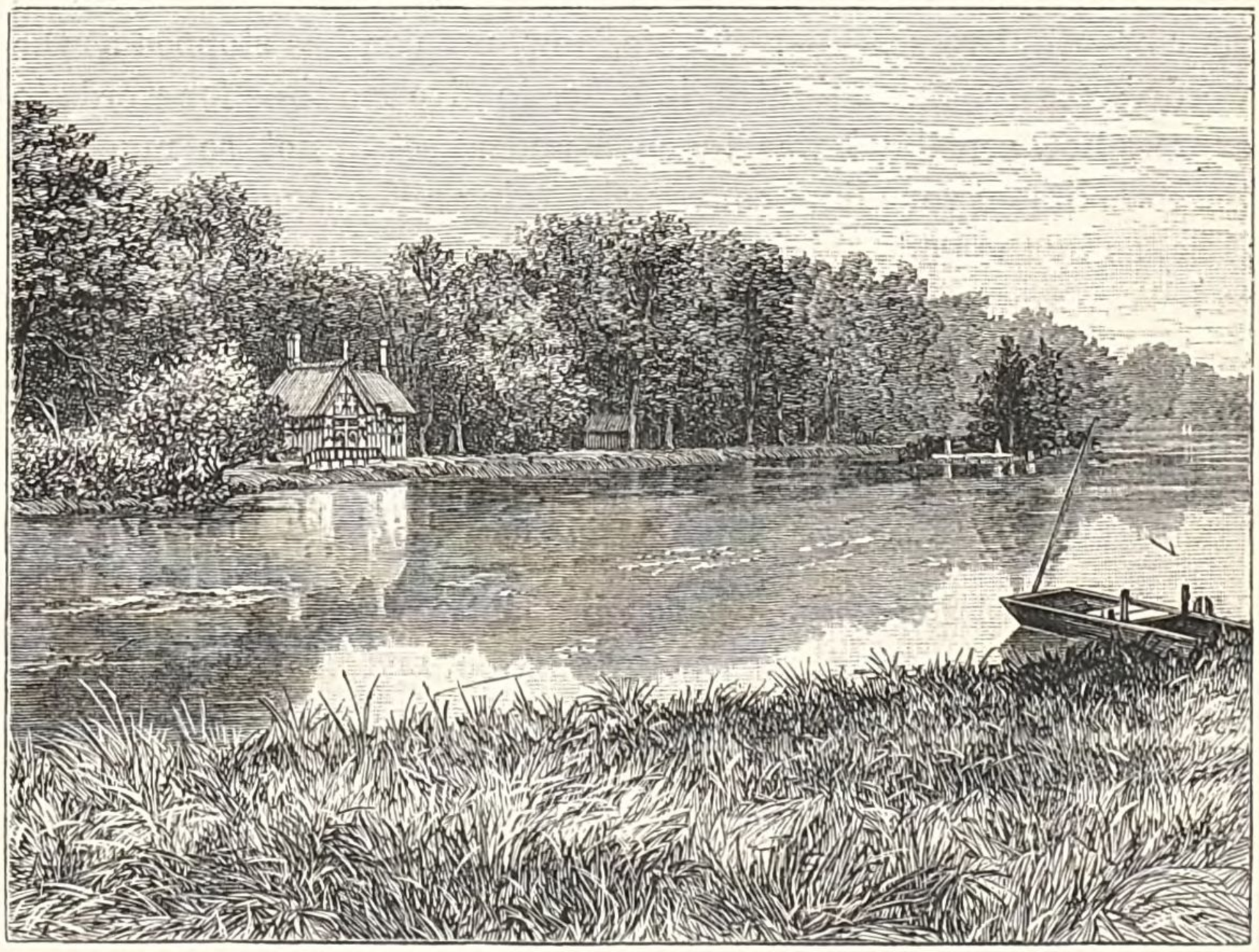
sainte oisiveté! I have already commenced, and made actual progress in, three or four works. The first (solely for my own advantage) are upon Universal History and the Corn Laws. The rest—intended for the advantage of the world (for next season I shall commence regular authorship)—are three light prose works, and one poetical tale. With one of the prose works, which is a sort of Werther, taken from fact, I am tolerably pleased.[1] The other two are satirical, and I don't think much of them.[2] The poem is nearly finished.[3]



LAKE AT KNEBWORTH.

So much for occupation. Now for indolence. We have, at the bottom of the park, a large piece of water—deep, clear, lined with fir, oak, beech; and breathing sweets from wild flowers, and music from the throats of blackbirds and nightingales. There I spend all my evenings. I am not one of those peripatetic philosophers who never walk without a book. I like my own thoughts better than those of other people. I wander about the banks of the water, or row over it a large clumsy boat,—sometimes till I have been startled to hear the clock strike twelve, and have felt that all the servants

[1] *Falkland.*

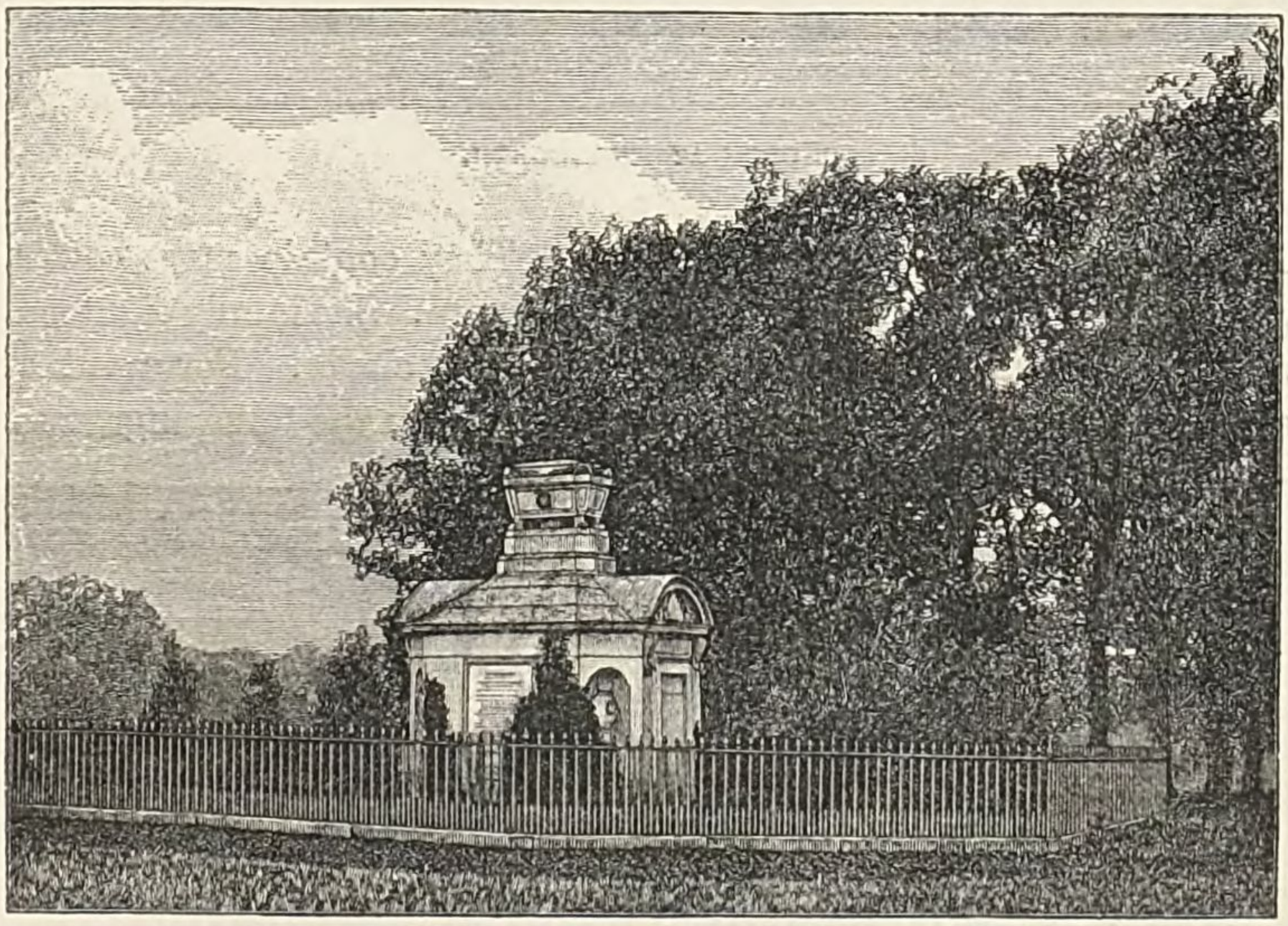
[2] One of these must have been *Pelham*; of the other I can find no trace.

[3] *O'Niel.*

would set me down as a madman, or at best a poor young gentleman crossed in love, and very likely to cross himself also in his garters. The water lies in a valley. Above it are trees, hills, a mausoleum, and a little church. For our church here, formerly a private chapel, is in the park. Do you suppose that here my thoughts want occupation? Alas! they are never idle when the dead are around me. But I am not going to be gloomy. Indeed, I have been writing a satire against gloomy people, and the Byronic mania—

'Of young men with pale faces, and raven black hair,
Who make frowns in the glass, and write odes to despair.'

Talking of Byron and poets, I have lately been much amongst the Blue Stockings. I go to town every fortnight for two or three days; and the evenings of those days, instead of being spent at balls, are generally consumed in the soirées of the savans, and the learned and literary ladies. You can have no idea what curious notes these people write me. Their affectation, their hunting after fine phrases, and their aversion to the common language of ordinary mortals, are quite wonderful. 'Write something in my album,' said a celebrated



MAUSOLEUM AT KNEBWORTH.

Blue to me the other night. Teased into consent I wrote—

Fools write here to show their wit,
And men of sense to laugh at it.

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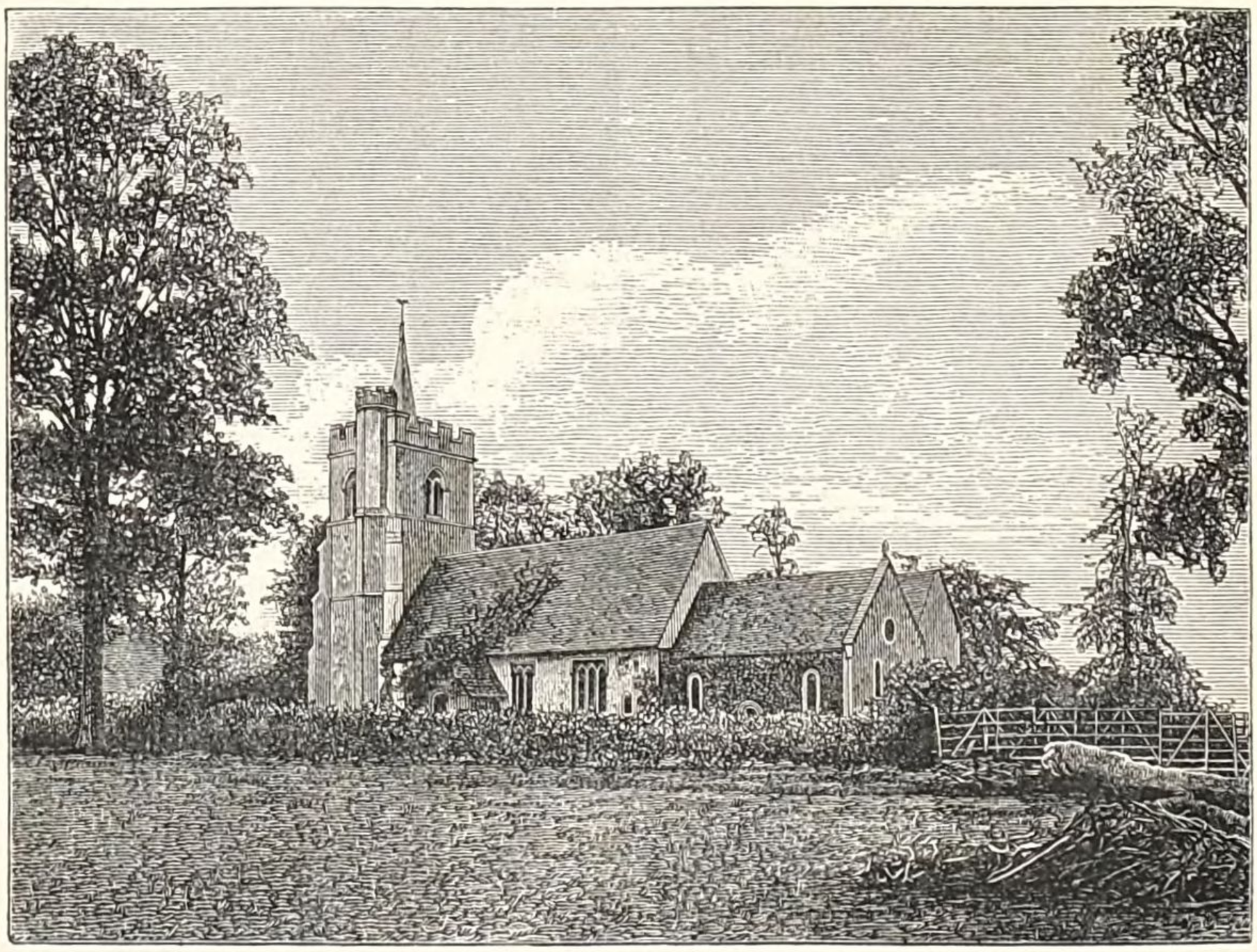
I need not tell you that the Blue looked exceedingly black. If the poems of L. E. L. (*alias* Miss Landon) are yet imported into Paris,



CHURCH AT KNEBWORTH.

I advise you to get them forthwith. They contain more power, pathos, and music than any I have lately seen. She is only eighteen, and as charming and unaffected as she is clever. For want of something better to fill up my letter, I send you the following verses —my own, of course :—

To the Dead.

I.

It is a husht and holy spot
  Where death has wrought thy dreamless bed,
And bade thy soul, while unforgot,
  Forget—that charter of the dead!

II.

At last thy heart is cold. The pain
  That wrings my own thou canst not see,
Nor turn to smiles the sullen strain
  Which soothes—because it breathes of thee.

III.

And, if my spirit stole the vow
From love and thee to waste on fame,
My only use for laurels now
Would be to wreathe them round thy name.

IV.

I would not thou shouldst cease to live
While Fame fresh being can bestow,
And to our broken *passion* give
The deathless memory of our *woe*.

V.

In life, a sever'd lot we bore;
In death, mine own, as once, thou art:
The grave, which severs *hands*, the more
But breaks the barrier from the *heart*.

VI.

As he who knew a charmed doom,
And saw friends, empires, ages, fade,[1]
I walk alone amidst the gloom
Of wrecks relentless time hath made.

VII.

Hope's latest link from life is wrench'd:
The bird that blest the night hath fled:
The lamp that lit the tomb is quench'd:
I stand, in darkness, with the dead.

If, my dear friend, in spite of the ungainly roughness of these lines, and the previous flippancy of my letter, you can imagine me neither mirthful from levity, nor stoical from the wise philosophy of the world—if you can imagine me, solitary and sad enough, Heaven knows, but neither listless nor cynical, struggling fiercely with myself, and the world through which my path is set—neither the master nor the slave of a destiny which divides my life, yet concentrates all its resolutions—if you can imagine me thus, then you will not misjudge the temper and the heart of one who in no selfish sorrows or troubles of his own can ever cease to feel for you and yours the sincerest interest and most faithful affection.

The careless manner in which my father speaks of the stanzas 'To the Dead,' when sending them to Mrs. Cunningham, was the consequence of his intense devotion to the memory of the girl who was the subject of them. He had

[1] St. Leon in Godwin's novel, so called.

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said in a previous letter that it was not from want of confidence that he was in some things reserved, but from 'the idea that the manner in which they affected him could have no interest for anyone else.' He had told Mrs. Cunningham of his early love, and the blight it had brought on him. She naturally believed that the effect would be transitory, and in this strain she answered him; which was a proof to him that she could not comprehend the full compass of his thoughts and feelings. Having embodied them in verse, he left his stanzas to tell their tale as a poetic effusion, and purposely spoke of them slightly to avoid the appearance of inviting sympathy which could not reach to the realities of his inner existence. To us, who are familiar with the story, the poem is one more instance of the paramount influence of that first great love. It will be seen from the third and fourth stanzas that he had consecrated his ambition to the idea that, winning fame, he would use it to confer a 'deathless memory' upon the unknown maiden whose destiny was to experience little of love except its anguish, and find in it the passage to an early grave. In the sketch of the story which my father wrote in his mature years the thought expressed in his verses to the 'Dead' was still present to him. He would not mention a name he revered for fear of exposing it to the scoffs which assailed his own. He would wait till it would be received with the honour due to it, and then only should the unspoken name be disclosed. The verses were sent to Mrs. Cunningham at a period when he still felt himself under a bond to give up Miss Wheeler. Two months later he was engaged to her. That event, with the superior power which belongs to the present, threw, for a time, into the background the supreme memories of other days; and, if the marriage had ended as propitiously as it began, in the background they would doubtless have remained. But in the disappointments and bitternesses of coming years my father's mind went on reverting to the enchanting child who had died from love to him,

and whose beautiful and steadfast nature appeared to promise all which he had missed in life, and for which he never ceased to yearn.

The month after Mrs. Cunningham received the verses 'To the Dead' she herself was mourning the death of a daughter, and my father wrote to soothe her the best he could under a sorrow he understood so well:

The Same to the Same.

Broadstairs: Thursday, July 1826.

I know not, my dearest friend, in what words to condole with you. All I can say to you must be commonplace. All the comfort I can bring you must be cold. You have lost one of the greatest of earthly blessings. I know it, I feel it. How can I dream of consoling you? When I had read eight lines of your letter I stopped. I folded it up. I went to the window for breath. I felt the fulness of your loss as if it were my own. I knew, by what I experienced myself, how great was the shock to your affection. And now, when I sit down to write to you, I *share*, I cannot attempt to *relieve*, your feelings. I know too keenly how imperfect must be my sympathy with a mother on the loss of her child. And yet I *do* sympathise with you, so strongly that, in writing to you, it seems as if it were my own loss I was attempting to reason away. My dear friend, would to God that reason *could* conquer feeling! Would that I could comfort you when I remind you of the treasures you have left, when I tell you that the affection you lavished on her will not return into yourself to corrode the feelings from which it sprung—that you have other affections, other interests into which it will flow, and that the ties you have left will become doubly endeared to you by the increased strength with which you will cling to their attachment. Time, in confirming your tenderness to *them*, will soften what is now so bitter in your remembrance of *her*.

The recollections of the young and innocent have more of the holiness and less of the bitterness which are mingled with regret. If there be no other world, at least they have been spared the afflictions of this: if there be another, it must for them be blest indeed. If we, who are tainted with the sins of years, can bring ourselves to believe in it, we must tremble in our belief. But for them Futurity has no terror. We may doubt, but we cannot fear. The remembrance of the dead is not always dark, not always sad. When we

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suffer here, we can go back in thought to the images of those who are beyond all suffering. Stung by the falsehoods, or wearied by the insipidities, of life, it is some comfort to feel that those, for whose lot we are most anxious, are safe beyond that bourne, dim it may be, and in all things else uncertain, but in our thoughts of them the settled assurance of a state where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. And thus time gives sweetness even to the memory of the dead, and what was regret becomes consolation.

I cannot turn from this to any lighter subject. What is fortitude in you would be want of feeling in me. I know how vain is the comfort I would hold out to you; but of what else can I write? We may trifle at our afflictions, but not at the afflictions of those we love. And though my attempts at consolation must be fruitless now, the thoughts which prompt them forestall the reaction which I well know every sorrow carries in itself. Meanwhile be assured at least that you have one friend who feels for you from his very soul, who thinks that in a new misfortune he has discovered a new tie, and who feels that his sympathy unites with yours the more tenderly because our sympathies are united in the memory of the dead. It is not in gaiety that attachment is cemented. What are the thousand pleasant links with which mirth and high spirits bind and brighten the careless communion of the happy, compared in strength to that one tie, so inconspicuous yet so intense, which sorrow draws around those who have suffered, out of the deepest, most unseen, recesses of the soul? Joy sheds its own lightness over the connections which it forms. But it is grief that gives depth to friendship. Write to me. Remember me now. You may forget me again when you are happy. Think that I share in your distress with the earnestness of one to whom misfortune is familiar, but who has not hardened under it. I do not care to be the friend of the happy; they have no need of friends. I cannot read over what I have written. Whatever it be, it must seem to you trite and weak. It cannot express your feelings, or mine. But never before did I know how truly I might call you my friend, or how faithfully, how affectionately, I was yours.

The Same to the Same.

5 Upper Seymour Street: Tuesday, Aug. 1826.

I am in town for one day, and sorely pressed for time. But I write to you once more, in order that I may once more express the

regret and sympathy with which I continue to think of you. Pray write to me immediately. Tell me how you are, what you are doing —all that relates to you. Believe me, I feel the greatest anxiety to hear; and the most welcome visitor I shall receive will be the thin paper of France, hallowed by the post-mark of St. Germains.

I have not yet seen the lady who, you say, is so mightily offended with me. *Lo so.* But every day makes me more indifferent to the opinion of the many. And yet I am not, as I once was, rancorous and scornful. I am indifferent to the opinion only, not to the happiness, of others. I wish the world well, and would promote its welfare, if I could, even at the cost of my own. A misanthrope by feeling, I am a philanthropist by principle. Mr. G——, the attaché, is returned. My brother met him the other day at the Duke of Sussex's. He is very much laughed at, poor man! but why, Heaven and the laughers only know. London is much amused by Lady A——'s elopement. Her Jacob was a great friend of my eldest brother's. English people never think they can have enough love without going off. Alas! directly they go off the love goes off too. Its only charm is in the secrecy and the difficulty from which they seek to free it. I am endeavouring, as you see, to get together all the chit-chat the world can furnish in order to divert you for a moment from thoughts of a more serious nature. But I earnestly long to hear from you.

The Same to the Same.

Knebworth: Friday, August 24, 1826.

Do not think me remiss in not having before answered your letter. I have been wandering about, and deserving the *vagabond*, if not the *romantic*, appellation you have given me.[1] By the by, (how nearly I had forgotten it!) I have given my eldest brother a letter of introduction to you, and I feel sure you will like him. I have seen a great deal of him since I came from abroad, and I think him one of the finest characters I know. He is dignified without being haughty, handsome without being affected, clever without being odd. In short, as you will see, he is what I am not, and is not what the world generally says I am.[2]

[1] Childe Harold.

[2] My father's eldest brother William, who in early life published two or three small volumes of verse, was a man of cultivated mind and some literary taste. Had his circumstances furnished him with any serious incentive to exertion, I have no doubt he would have distinguished himself. But he was without ambition.

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I am in profound contemplation of a speedy excursion to Ireland; but I may be in Paris before the end of the year. *Cela dépend.* Keep up your spirits, dear friend.

The Same to the Same.

Knebworth: October 25, 1826.

I was much grieved to find by your last letter that your spirits were still so affected. I wish most earnestly that I could offer you any adequate comfort. But you know that I feel for you, and all else that I could say would be unavailing. Since I last wrote much has occurred to me. My fate has been nearly altered entirely, and for ever. But the die has been cast otherwise, and I am still—as I have been. This is a long story, and now an idle one. Let me turn from it to other subjects. Miss Landon, whom you ask me about, is very young,—not pretty, but pleasing, and with deep blue eyes,—short and ill-made,—has no fortune but what she makes by writing, which is about 1,000*l.* a year. She is a Dean's daughter, or something of that sort.

It is a dim, heavy, desolate evening; the trees quite breathless; one deep cloud over the sky; the deer grouped under my window, and the old gray tower of the church just beyond. I am here only for a few days, and I shall leave these scenes with the more regret because I am now going to enter upon a new life. Within the last few days I have made myself an opening to the House. In all probability I shall enter it in December. But there is still some doubt on the subject, so that I will say nothing further till all is decided one way or other. However that be, I shall devote myself to society the whole of this year. We govern men, not by our own strength, but by their imbecility. I am completing a Satire upon England and English people. I shall publish it early in the winter. I have heard no news of any sort. But, by the way, I have met a little German Count who knew you at Milan—an extremely likeable man.

CHAPTER II.

ENGAGED. 1826. ÆT. 23.

My father's allusion (in his correspondence with Mrs. Cunningham) to a change of life which, if made, would have been 'entire and for ever,' but which was not made because 'the die had been cast otherwise,' is explained by his letters to his mother.

Before his feelings were deeply engaged, or his honour committed, he had promised her not to marry without her consent: and, in order to escape the temptation of breaking that promise, he immediately returned to Paris. But Miss Wheeler was not disposed to regard Mrs. Bulwer Lytton's disapproval as an absolute obstacle to a marriage seriously desired by that lady's son; nor did she shrink from the thought of an engagement which, if it depended for its fulfilment on the removal of the mother's objections, might be indefinitely prolonged.

Communications from her had brought him back to England. They met again in the literary coteries of which he speaks so contemptuously in one of his letters to his Paris friend. The intercourse thus partially renewed did not lead to a positive engagement; but it strengthened the tie which left him less and less able to withdraw from it. 'I am still free,' he wrote to Mrs. Cunningham, 'at least, I may so call myself; but do not congratulate me. The thought of it gives me no pleasure:' and it was with a sorely troubled and divided heart that he again tore himself away from that intercourse, in

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obedience to the promise of which his mother was not slow to remind him. In this unsettled state of mind, pride, if not prudence, would probably have weaned him by degrees from all lingering hopes and wishes associated with Miss Wheeler, had he received from her a distinct assurance that she was resolved not to marry him without his mother's approval, or under conditions entailing on him an almost total sacrifice of his income. No such announcement came in aid of his struggle; yet, even without it, the struggle might perhaps have been successful had his mother's recognition of it been of a kind to make him feel that she appreciated and commiserated the pang it cost him. The most sensible woman, however, is sure to mismanage her interests when she is completely under the influence of her feelings; and the love of a mother is often as jealous as that of a mistress. My grandmother was too deeply hurt in her own affection to sympathise with my father's attachment to Miss Wheeler, or to treat with much tenderness the poignant distress of a struggle which proved to her, at every moment, how strong was the dominion already established over her son's heart by an influence hostile to her own.

Smarting from a sense of unrecognised sacrifice, and conscious that by the woman he loved his flight was regarded as a desertion, my father (in one of those sudden and fatal impulses which so often decide the destiny of an entire life) returned to Miss Wheeler. The only capacity in which he could resume the intercourse twice broken off was that of a betrothed lover; and from this moment his course (however painful might be the progress, or disastrous the end, of it) was plainly prescribed to him not by his affection only, but by every sentiment of honour, duty, and devotion.

CHAP. II.

ÆT. 23

Edward Bulwer to his Mother.

Knebworth: October 21, 1826.

Let me answer, once for all, what you have so often (was it generously, or even quite justly?) brought up against me, viz., the promise which, long since, out of the warmth and sincerity of my heart, I so incautiously gave you, not to marry without your consent.

In order not to fail the promise thus given, when I received your first letter from Sandgate, I immediately broke off my intercourse with Miss Wheeler. I went to Knebworth. And whilst I was there, writhing beneath the sacrifice I had made to you, and *you alone*, you accused me of feelings and motives so unworthy that from any one else the accusation would have roused my bitterest resentment; from *you* it wounded me to the quick in the tenderest point of what is most sensitive in my affection. It was this, and *this only*, which brought me again to Miss Wheeler. I could not help feeling that the wrong you then did me was undeserved by the loss which, for your sake, I had inflicted on myself. And being, as I then was, in the first flush and vehemence of my attachment, was it not natural that, thus goaded and incensed, I should return to what, every moment, I was learning more and more bitterly to miss?

This was the great epoch of my present situation. From that moment it was impossible for me, or for any man with human feelings, not to be led on step by step till return was impossible. Impossible, not through the fear of any consequences to myself from a renewal of the sacrifice I had already made, but because I myself should no longer have been the only victim of it. It was during this time that, when you twice spoke to me of the promise made in circumstances so different, I twice said to you, 'But it is your approbation, not your consent, that you withhold. You cannot take upon yourself the responsibility of positively withholding the latter.' Twice I understood you to say that you also recognised this distinction. I mention this because it has been always kept in view by me, and I have constantly thought that, when you perceived how seriously and deeply my happiness was involved, your objections would cease. In this hope, moreover, I was strengthened by the occasional kindness with which you spoke to me on the subject of it. But while I refer to this distinction between approbation and consent, I candidly confess that I lay but little stress on

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it. For I certainly made to you the promise you recall, meaning it, at the time, in the fullest sense of the words; and although I think that a promise so made, at a time when by no means could I possibly foresee all that has since happened, cannot fairly be treated as absolutely unalterable by any force of circumstance, yet I own that what causes me the keenest regret in reference to the marriage I now contemplate, is that I am placed by it under the necessity of not thoroughly acting up to that promise.

I say *necessity*. For let me now submit to you the case, as it really stands before me. I am placed between two duties. First, the duty involved in this promise to you, and my desire to comply with your wishes. Secondly, the duty involved in my engagement with Miss Wheeler. If I break the first duty I hurt no one. Not at least seriously. I shall cost you a momentary disappointment and uneasiness upon my own behalf. But *you yourself*, I shall not seriously injure. On the other hand, if I break my engagement with Miss Wheeler, shall I not most seriously injure her—her happiness perhaps for life, her position now at any rate,—all, in short, which at this moment has no other protection than my loyal devotion to its sacred claims? For, put aside *my* feelings—hers too—remember only her position, so singular, so unsheltered. This is the case I, at least, have to consider. Let any *man* decide which is the paramount duty of the two, and whether I am not justified when I say that I am under a *necessity* to regard the other as only subordinate to it. I say nothing about my own honour, so far at least as the opinion of the world can affect it. I really don't care so much about public opinion but that I would readily sacrifice *that* to satisfy *you*.

In what I have said of my situation, I don't wish, I don't attempt, to vindicate my conduct from all blame. I confessed before, and I confess still, that I was originally wrong in yielding to the charm of an attraction, and the growth of an affection, which you disapproved. But, surely I am not wrong *now*, when, in opposition not only to my most important and permanent interests, but also to the strongest instincts and happiest habits of my life, even in its relation to your own, I am yielding to what I believe to be my duty. This also I will say, with respect to that promise of which again and again you remind me. The very circumstance of my having given it is a proof of my desire to gratify you, and a token that nothing selfish or trivial could have caused me to disobey you. The sincerity of this assurance you will not, you cannot,

deny. Because, by insincerity, when we reproach another with that word, we mean a falsehood uttered, or acted, in his own interest by the person to whom we impute it. But all *my* interests lie so wholly on the opposite side of my action, that you cannot for a moment imagine them to be the motives of it. In conclusion, I have only two things to say. First, that, when you speak of marriage as the most important point on which a son can compliment a parent, and when I allow that there is much justice in the remark, *you*, I feel sure, will also allow that marriage is a step which solely concerns the persons who take it, and that although their parents may be *disappointed* by their decision, they have no just ground for *displeasure*. Moreover, just reflect for a moment. What compliment does a son pay to his parents when he makes a good marriage only, or mainly, to further his own interests, or satisfy his own inclinations? The parents must look to the *motive* before they can be rationally pleased with the *action*. Secondly, I have to say that, however poor, disappointed, or embarrassed I myself may be hereafter, neither you nor any human being can ever have cause for 'humiliation' or 'mortification' at a relationship with me. Up to the hour of my marriage, and inclusive of that event, I have committed, perhaps, many *imprudent*, but no *discreditable*, actions. I venture to assert that this will always be the case. It is useless to add anything further. I believe I have answered your letter fully. God bless you, my dear, dear mother! Believe me, I am much more grieved than you can be at disappointing you in anything.

Yet still he lingered on the brink of the marriage thus resolutely maintained and eloquently defended. For still the poor mother pertinaciously combated his decision, and strove hard to enforce her own view of filial duty in regard to it. What it cost him to resist her entreaties and reproaches (more persuasive, as they were, to him than the parental threats which sometimes accompanied them) is apparent in all his letters to her on this subject.

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The Same to the Same.

1827.

My dearest Mother,—I am not well, and may not answer your letter as clearly as I could wish. But I cannot leave unanswered, for a day even, your charge of want of gratitude and affection. Put aside for the present my engagement with Miss Wheeler. I will come to it by-and-by. Can you mention anything else in which I have acted contrary to your commands? You will say, at first, 'A thousand.' But I know well that, upon consideration, you will be unable to name one. You have blamed me many times, and justly; but never for anything worse than some *warm expression*, or an *occasional want of economy*. With regard to the warm expressions, they have arisen from irritation of temper, but never from want of affection. But systematic propriety of conduct is not effaced by occasional irritation of temper. I have never acted against your commands; and, if I have disappointed your expectations, it has been from the imperfection of my nature, not from the inclination of it. Not being all you could wish is surely a very different thing from acting contrary to your wishes. You have also blamed me for occasional want of economy. As it would be irrelevant to dwell much on this *now*, and I do not think you would press it, I will merely ask leave to remind you that it has only been for *occasional*, not for *continued*, or habitual, extravagance, that you have ever had cause to find fault with me. The first is an error from which not even a miser is always free; and I have so seldom fallen into it that, at this moment, instead of diminishing, or embarrassing, I have increased my income, *even without counting the money I get by writing*.

Now that I am speaking of this, it appears to me that Paley and other theologians have rightly described the duty of a son. The best way by which, according to these writers, children can requite the care of their parents (when the parents do not want their pecuniary support) is by a creditable and honourable course of life. And for these reasons—first, because all a son does in the course of his life reflects credit, or the reverse, on the education given him by his parents; and secondly, because what parents wish for their children is the happiness which involves and rewards respectability of character and action, so that, by a creditable line of conduct, children will best fulfil the wishes, as well as repay the care, of their parents. If you judge my past conduct by this rule, I am sure you will not

find in it matter for displeasure. I can safely say that, both at College and afterwards in the world, I have set a curb to tastes naturally expensive, and passions naturally headstrong, in order not to discredit your affection and the education it gave me. Perhaps in the heat of Youth such sacrifices and restraints are more difficult than they seem to the wisdom and composure of Age. But I have done more than this. Instead of being contented with not acting discreditably, I have endeavoured to act creditably. And for the same reason. When I obtained the prize at Cambridge, I felt more pleasure for your sake than for mine; and on the only occasions when I have hitherto been enabled to appear in public—I mean in my writings for the public—I have endeavoured to associate your name with my undertakings in such a way as to reflect upon you whatever credit they might win. *Conduct* is in our own power, *Constitution* is not. If my conduct has been respectable, it is my merit. If my constitution has been irritable (and, consequently, unamiable), it is not my fault. I think therefore that, when you take the latter into such severe consideration, I may justly ask you not to forget the former.

I have now answered an accusation which I feel, and always have felt, most bitterly. I have endeavoured to show that warm words, stricken now and then from the heat of a fretful temper, are not to be taken for defects of affection or acts of disobedience, unless they are coupled with disobedient or unfeeling conduct; and I have wished to win your recognition of what I assert, that my conduct, if judged by fair rules, has not been wanting in affection or gratitude, but rather the reverse.

But I have hitherto been speaking only of the past. I now come to the present, and the question of my engagement to Miss Wheeler. In this my conduct, I admit, has been very much to blame. I ought not to have allowed myself to love her as I do. I ought not to have endeavoured to win her affections. I should have left her directly I found that either she or I were in any danger of caring for each other so much as to be miserable unless we were united. I own this, most sincerely. I repent it most bitterly. Wretched and tortured as I am, this reflection is the most rankling and painful of all my torments. The only thing I can say in extenuation of the fault I acknowledge, is that I fell in love insensibly—that I did not perceive how far I was gone till the moment that revealed it to myself left me powerless to conceal it from her—that I *did* speak to you as soon as I found she really

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loved me—that I *did* separate from her as soon as I received your answer—and that nothing but the extremest misery, aggravated first by your harsh reception of the bitter sacrifice I had made, and then rendered intolerable by the news of her dangerous illness, would have induced me to torment her into a renewal of our former correspondence.

I mention these things as extenuations, not as excuses. I feel that the step was a wrong one; and, God knows, my own feelings have sufficiently punished me for it. But, whilst I own that this first part of my conduct is inexcusable, I do most conscientiously affirm that, in my marriage with Miss Wheeler, I can recognise no cause for self-reproach, no dereliction of duty, no indifference to your feelings. As for my own feelings, and my own happiness, if these alone were concerned in the matter, I would sacrifice them still to my filial respect for your present wishes, and my grateful recollection of your past kindness. But, whether the path before me leads to happiness or misery, I can follow no other. I am perfectly aware of all the worldly disadvantages I incur (though I think them not so great as they seem to you). I am perfectly aware that I justly incur your displeasure—not for marrying Miss Wheeler, but for having engaged her affections and my own, without due consideration of all the reasons which have distressed you in regard to our marriage. I know, also, that hereafter I can have no claim whatever upon you, and that, in every circumstance, I owe you unabated gratitude for what you have hitherto done for me. But I am not the less sure that, were you in my place, you would act as I am acting. I do not marry from headstrong passion, nor from any sanguine hope of happiness. I have had too severe a conflict with myself not to look to the future rather with despondency than pleasure. And the view you take of it is quite enough to embitter my peace of mind. All I ask you to remember on my behalf is, that it is not because I prefer to your approval any scheme of pleasure or advantage to myself, that I am acting contrary to your wishes; that it is not your express command I disobey; that I act not now in any common event, or upon any ordinary motive; but that I differ from you here in the most important and responsible action of my life, under the full impression (and this I say from my very soul) that not my heart only, but my conscience, can admit no other course of action.

This long letter is not, perhaps, what I should have written had I been well, and in better spirits. In writing it I have endeavoured

to avoid all that might seem an appeal to your feelings. And in that endeavour to avoid all expressions of endearment which might, in the present case, be suspected and misconstrued, perhaps I have fallen into the opposite extreme. But I would not end this letter, if I did not think you likely to doubt my sincerity, without saying something of the regret I feel in displeasing you, and acting (I *must* say, for the *first* time) against your wishes. As it is, I will only most heartily wish you—whatever may become of me—all health, all happiness, and every blessing. And I assure you that I am now, and that, under every change of circumstance, I always shall be,

Your most affectionate son,
E. L. B.

The Same to the Same.

April 16, 1827.

My dear Mother,—I shall be very short in answering your letter, in order not to bore you more than I can help on this subject.

You ask what you could have thought of my wishing to marry Miss Wheeler (after previously saying I did not wish it), but one of two things: either that I had deceived you, or that I had made an ostentatious merit of giving up what had never been intended. I answer to this that, had you not been predisposed to put a bad construction on the action, both these suppositions would have appeared to you improbable and far-fetched. The *most* probable inference would have been that I was *not at first* in love with her, and therefore did not at first wish to marry her; that I *was* in love with her *afterwards*, and therefore did afterwards wish to marry her. Perhaps no man ever desired, on the first acquaintance, to marry a poor woman.

You say, secondly, in the instance of marriage, that a son ought to show respect, &c., for his parent. To this I say again, that marriage is of all cases the one in which a difference with parents is most universally allowed; and that nothing but the full conviction that I should fail in faith and honour to Miss Wheeler, if I did not marry her, would now induce me to do so. I can most firmly and sincerely say that I act conscientiously; and that, even if Miss Wheeler behaves ill to me hereafter, I shall have everything to *regret*, but nothing to *repent*. It may have been my fault to love her; it will not be my fault to have married her.

I said that in no instance had I acted against your commands.

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You answer that I have ; and then you name instances in which *you* acted according to my wishes. This I never questioned, but I beg, my dear mother, to remind you that *your* acting according to *my* wishes is not *my* acting against *your* commands. I said I was knocked about at Mr. Ruddock's. You were kind enough to remove me. But you gave me no orders to stay ; therefore I did not disobey you by not staying. I said I did not like Eton. I do not think you ever expressed a wish that I should go there : certainly you never commanded me to go ; therefore I did not disobey you by not going. Mr. Jowett's is exactly the same case. With regard to Cambridge, I pointed out to you the advantages of going as a Fellow Commoner. You let me become one, but you never ordered me to remain a Pensioner ; therefore I did not disobey you by not remaining a Pensioner. I am sure, my dear mother, that you will acknowledge, upon consideration, that all these were instances of *your kindness*, and not of *my disobedience*.

In conclusion, I beg to assure you that in defending myself I meant, and mean, no imputation to you ; that I am deeply sensible of your past kindness to me, both in pecuniary matters and in all others ; and that though I marry a woman whom I love and respect, I do not feel any of that satisfaction and happiness which I should have felt had you not been displeased with the step. Believe me, unalterably,

Your most affectionate son,

E. L. B.

These letters wholly failed to soften my grandmother's bitter disappointment at the prospect of an event which was now inevitable. My father was forced to abandon the hope of reconciling her to his marriage ; and, with the loss of that hope, he had no longer any motive, or excuse, for prolonging a painful situation. On May 1, 1827, he wrote to Mrs. Cunningham :—

You will deem me a very unreasonable person to be dejected and wretched at the very moment I ought to be most joyous and light-hearted. Prepare, *ma belle amie*, prepare ! I am going to be married ! ! ! And that very soon. Perhaps in less than a month. My intended is very beautiful, very clever, very good ; but, alas ! the human heart is inscrutable. I love, and am loved. My heart is satisfied, my judgment too. If the life before me is not free

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from difficulty, anxiety, labour, yet in the contemplation of these my courage feels only a consciousness, which should be joyous, of power to overcome them all. And still, I am wretched. My plan is, after marriage, to hire a large old-fashioned house I have found in the country, neither near London nor yet very far from it: to live there in great retirement for three years, and give myself wholly up to literature. In which I hope to earn some of that 'breath of fools' which the knaves have wisely called Reputation. At the end of that time I shall travel over Europe for three years more; and then—settle in London, and turn M.P. and politician.

I much wish to send you a little work I have published, and another just coming out. Tell me how I can do so without subjecting you to any expense. The first has created some sensation, and more enemies here. The religionists and pseudo-moralists are furious with it. *N'importe!* My conscience acquits me of all evil design. But you must read it, and judge. I think it will please you, for it is at least thoughtful, and true in its delineation of the feelings it represents.[1] The forthcoming work is a poem,[2] and a great part of it was written at Versailles. I have been very quiet all this season. Tired as I had long been of society, it has tired me more than ever this year. 'Othello's occupation's gone.' I had no object, and I feel as dull and indifferent to all kinds of social amusement as any old valetudinarian who has seen all his old hopes and friends drop off from him, one by one, and finds himself left to the solitary possession of gloom and gout.

Write to me. Enliven my selfish troubles by the assurance that you are well, and not too mindful of the past. Such news will give me that pleasure which I have always found in the happiness of those who are dear to me. How is your daughter? Remember me most kindly to her. When she marries and comes to England, we shall meet, I hope. As for *you*, I have very little hope of seeing you till I find my own way to your City of the Soul, and—Soups. Meanwhile, you must not deny me the pleasure of your correspondence. As a Benedict, bound to one spot and one woman, I shall have more leisure to write to you. And, to requite your generosity in writing to a married man, I will not intrude on you, out of place or out of season, any discourse about my matrimonial cares or parental emotions. God bless you! and believe me that, whatever be the changes through which my life may pass, they will not change my friendship for you.

[1] *Falkland.* [2] *O'Niel.*

CHAPTER III.

MARRIED. 1827. ÆT. 24.

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THE event referred to in the preceding letter as imminent, did not take place till four months later. Mrs. Bulwer Lytton attributed her son's passionate (and, as it seemed to her, infatuated) admiration of Miss Wheeler to the personal attractions of its object, acting on an exaggerated estimate of the feelings he believed himself to have inspired, and the obligation laid upon him by the strength of that belief.

It was impossible that she should view without repugnance the prospect of having for her sister-in-law a woman who professed the peculiar social and religious principles which Mrs. Wheeler had espoused. Nor was it unreasonable that she should see in the unhappy circumstances of my poor mother's bringing up every conceivable disqualification for the wife of a very young, very proud, and very sensitive man, who was certain to expect from her a more than possible fulfilment of the exalted ideal with which his affection identified her image. She was convinced, moreover, that the love between two natures, which appeared to her so fundamentally different from each other, could not possibly be durable; and that its decline would reveal a radical incompatibility of character fatal to the harmony of married life, under what must be, at the best, very trying conditions. She therefore relaxed no effort to shake a resolution that not only distressed but alarmed her. She had heard, and she believed, that my mother was much older than my father supposed her to be, and that she had already been engaged to some one else. To

the story of the previous engagement, my father replied that it in nowise affected the nature of Miss Wheeler's present feelings for himself; whilst, if true, it would probably increase the unmerited injury she might suffer from the rupture of his own engagement to her. 'I deeply respect,' he wrote, 'the natural penetration of your judgment; but I cannot help thinking that one who has seen a woman several times in trying situations must know her better than she can be known to another who has only seen her a few times in ordinary society. Matrimonial philandering has always appeared to me a contemptible frivolity. I am not blinded to Rosina's faults, as (forgive me for saying it) you, I think, are blinded to her merits. It is not her fault that she could not live with her mother. I know that her bringing up has been a most unhappy one. But it has not deprived her of a mind and heart, for which I love her far too well to flirt with her.' As for the story about the age of his betrothed, he was so convinced that on this point his mother had been misinformed that he agreed confidently, though reluctantly, to abide by the issue of the inquiries on which she insisted. Hence the following letters:—

Edward Bulwer to his Mother.

July, 1827.

Do not, my dear mother, let us misunderstand each other, after all the explanations I have endeavoured to give you. When you talk of 'disentangling' me, I can assure you that there is no entanglement at all. To Miss Wheeler I am tied only by the strength of my affection and the truth of my esteem. This tie nothing can undo but her unworthiness; and that would be my worst affliction. The only circumstance that can now delay our marriage is the prospect of your full consent to it. Nor is my love for Rosina of the blind sort you suppose. I see all her faults such as they are, but I love her mind a thousand times more than her person.

The Same to the Same.

August 2, 1827.

My dear Mother,—For the last two months I have been deferring the definite period of my marriage from time to time, in order to obtain those letters from Ireland which you considered essential.

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At length I am unable, in common decency and honour, to do so any longer. It is now a year (all but one month) since first I spoke to Miss Wheeler. I have, since that time, endeavoured to pay as much attention and deference as I possibly could to your wishes. I say *possibly could*, because, from the moment I spoke to Miss Wheeler, the matter no longer rested only with me. Her happiness was implicated as well as my own; and, however I might have been willing to sacrifice the latter, I had no right whatever to sacrifice the former. I have waited, therefore, from month to month in the hope that, when you saw it was no momentary liking or fancy, your reluctance would ultimately be conquered. Had it been so, I should have considered such an event the happiest in my life. As it is, however I may be grieved, I have no ground of complaint. I should still have continued to protract this step had my own selfish wishes been solely concerned. But I cannot see the very declining state of Miss Wheeler's health without severe self-reproach, and the most conscientious conviction that nothing (not even deference to you) can any longer justify me in trifling with her health and happiness.

I have therefore, *at last*, fixed a day for my marriage (the 29th of this month), choosing one which will allow ample time for the arrival of news from Ireland, and promising you still that, in the event (which I tell you frankly I think most improbable) of the date of Miss Wheeler's birth being proved to be 1800 or 1801, I will not marry her.

I grieve, more than any human being can conceive, at acting against your wishes in this matter. God knows I have not had one day of happiness for months; nor do I anticipate any great store of it hereafter. Miss Wheeler's affection, which I trust entirely, may do much, but not all. Nor shall I ever feel even *content* till an event occurs which I still fondly hope and cling to—I mean the removal of your repugnance to this step, and the conquest of your prepossessions against Miss Wheeler.

God bless you, my dear mother, whatever becomes of your unhappy but sincerely affectionate son, E. L. B.

The Same to the Same.

August 5, 1827.

After our repeated conversations, and after the many months during which the period of my marriage has been deferred, I own that, in *my* turn, I am surprised to think you should imagine an event so often discussed, and so long protracted, either sudden or unexpected.

You must, my dear mother, be aware that, after having proposed to Miss Wheeler several months ago, it became necessary at one time or other to appoint a day for our marriage. This, in deference to you, I deferred as long as I possibly could ; but, Sir John Doyle having received the King's orders respecting his arrangements for the summer, it was necessary to come to a definite conclusion before he left town. The day, therefore, being settled, it cannot be again unsettled. But you tell me to wait for news from Ireland. I will. For, in the first place, I send you a letter from Miss Wheeler's guardian, a gentleman of respectability, which to my mind sets the matter at rest. And, to add to the certainty of your agent's being deceived, Miss Wheeler's sister was born in the month of September, 1800 ; which explains the mistake. Now, should this not satisfy you as it does me, you have still ample time, in addition to the long period you have already had, to obtain further evidence. But, if you cannot rely upon your own agent being able to procure it either by writing or sending, I will, *myself*, take your office, and send over on Monday a lawyer, who shall obtain the fullest and most legal proof that can be got, and who is pledged to return with such proof long previous to the day appointed. I beg to assure you, my dear mother, that I shall think nothing of the trouble and expense, if it satisfies—not *me* (for I am satisfied) but yourself.

You tell me to reflect and pause. The time is past when I could pause without breach of faith and duty ; and, as for reflection, the thought of what I am about is never absent from my mind. Could you tell how heavy is the burden of it, and how bitter the effort to bear it, I know you would think less harshly of one who was never more lovingly, or less undutifully, than at this moment, your affectionate son, E. L. B.

The Same to the Same.

August 7, 1827.

Owing to a mistake of my servant, a short note I wrote to you yesterday did not go. To-day, having received no letters, I have sent off a lawyer with full and express particulars. He is a Chancery one, and used, by the course of his profession, to inquiries into births. He is to have the evidence properly and legally attested and sworn, and is to forward an exact duplicate to you.

For the rest of your letter, I have already replied to it as far as I can ; and I am sufficiently unhappy not to need any additional working upon my feelings. Everything depends upon the result of this inquiry. I own that I have no doubt of it whatever. We may hear in seven days, certainly in ten. Believe me, as to the rest,

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that neither Miss Wheeler nor any other person, or circumstance, can ever rob you of the affection of your most affectionate son,

E. L. B.

The Same to the Same.

August 18, 1827.

My dear Mother,—I have procured and enclose the most positive evidence that can be obtained in default of the register.

As you will see, it proves that the youngest child was born in 1802, on November 4, and that the child's name was Rosina. It is useless to comment upon this evidence.

You will see now that on this subject there can be no further discussion. The Honour I speak of as binding me to Miss Wheeler is not what you suppose. There are two sorts of Honour. One regulates our conduct to the world, the other to individuals, and to ourselves. The first is what is commonly called Honour; the second is Conscience. The first bids us deserve the good opinion of others; the second forbids us to forfeit our own.

I have no claim—I never advanced any claim—upon you. Whatever may be my future fate, I must, I shall, support it.

God bless you, my dear Mother, and farewell!

E. L. B.

The Same to the Same.

August 20, 1827.

My dear Mother,—For God's sake spare me! I have neither health of body, nor strength of mind, to bear half, no, not one-tenth part, of what I do suffer.

Put yourself in my place for one moment. Imagine that *you* make no part of my feelings. Only suppose that I see every hope, every object of ambition, I have cherished for years and years, cut down at one stroke; that this stroke must be dealt by my own hand; that I see myself condemned, in the very spring of my age, with every aspiration restless within me, to a life of seclusion and poverty for ever. Put yourself in contemplation of the certainty of such a fate. Recollect my nature—never contented, never at rest. Then ask yourself whether I can be blind or indifferent to such a prospect. Whether I need any aggravation of its miseries by you; and whether it must not be a powerful inducement that can make me confront and endure it. That inducement I have told you in every previous letter. I repeat it in this. It is the conscientious conviction that I am acting rightly. No man has a choice between right and wrong when he has clearly perceived the difference be-

tween them. What is the use of training the mind more in one direction than another, if the result has no effect upon the direction of conduct? A man is either the slave of passion or the servant of duty. And, in this matter, Heaven knows I am not passion's slave.

Grant all you say. Grant that I exaggerate Miss Wheeler's affection for me, and that she will not break her heart if I leave her. Grant that I also exaggerate absurdly any possible injury to her position from the rupture of our long engagement. I do not dispute what you urge on this last point. I have never supposed that a young lady, whose conduct has been irreproachable, can be permanently injured in her matrimonial prospects by the rupture of an engagement which leaves her more or less heart-free. But I think that no honourable high-minded gentleman is justified in breaking such an engagement as mine solely upon grounds which nothing has altered since he first entered into it. There is only one ground on which withdrawal from such an engagement can be right; and that is the discovery that the young lady's heart is not in it, or that her character is so unworthy, or her disposition so uncongenial, as to destroy all prospect of a union founded on mutual love and esteem. But the length of my engagement has only confirmed my love and esteem for Miss Wheeler; and were I now to forfeit hers for the sake of any worldly advantage, what worldly advantage could render tolerable to me my own estimate of myself?

Enough of this. All you say only makes me more wretched, without moving me one iota from the only path (thorny though it be) which I can tread with self-respect. I scarcely know what I am writing. Go to town, if you wish it. See Miss Wheeler, if you please. If the ties between us are to be broken, she is the only human being who can break them.

E. L. B.

The Same to the Same.

August 27, 1827.

Whatever you think now of all I have said in vain, you will forgive me hereafter for having spoken plainly, even warmly.

If I have lost your affection, it has not been without an agonised effort to retain it. I only entreat you, again and again, to pause before you utterly reject one whose sole motive has been to deserve the sympathy you withhold.

And now, if this is to end all correspondence between us, I can only wish you, most fervently, all possible health and happiness, and assure you that they shall never be disturbed by the unwelcome intrusion of your affectionate son, E. L. B.

BOOK VII.

1826-31

From the 'Morning Post' of Thursday, August 30, 1827.

'On Wednesday last, the 29th inst., was married at St. James' Church, by the Hon. and Rev. W. Bentinck, Edward Lytton Bulwer, Esq., third son of the late General Bulwer, of Heydon Hall, Norfolk, and of Mrs. Bulwer Lytton, of Knebworth Park, Herts, to Rosina Doyle Wheeler, of Lizard Connel, in the county of Limerick, only surviving daughter of the late Francis Massy Wheeler, Esq., of Lizard Connel and Ballywise.

'The bride, who is remarkably beautiful, was given away by her uncle, General Sir John Doyle, Bart., and the happy pair, partaking of a cold collation at the house of Colonel Doyle, Montagu Square, set off for their seat, Woodcot House, in Oxfordshire.

I have now given, from the only authentic record of them, all the particulars relative to the circumstances of my father's marriage. Their multiplied evidence of his early affection for my mother is, I think, no unworthy tribute to her character and conduct at a time when, a young unmarried girl, she was placed in a very difficult and unhappy position. And on my father's side the history illustrates with great force that depth and strength of character which it is my object to portray with the utmost fidelity in my power. The facts which have here been related without reserve will, I trust, greatly abbreviate my task in dealing with the painful sequel of the story; into which it would be impossible for me to enter minutely without the appearance of sitting in judgment on my parents. I might have spared a part of what I have printed already if their ill-omened union had not produced a multiplicity of published extravagances which would not permit me to dismiss the subject with the simple statement that, at an early age, my father married for love, contrary to the wishes of his mother, and that his marriage was imprudent and unhappy.

His own letters will now enable all candid persons to judge for themselves whether the writer of them could have been capable of the brutality, the cruelty, the meanness and selfishness, attributed to him in the numerous libels which he himself scorned to notice, and which cannot be repeated by his son, even for the purpose of refuting them.

WOODCOT (FRONT VIEW).

CHAPTER IV.

WOODCOT. 1827. ÆT. 24.

ABOUT six miles from Reading, a road winding sometimes through pleasant copses, sometimes under park palings, or between banks covered with fern and dotted here and there with pretty little old-fashioned cottages not yet improved into ugliness, emerges at last upon a wider landscape just in front of the pleasure-grounds surrounding a rather large, white-faced, long-winged, building still known as Woodcot House. The house itself has no pretension to architectural beauty, or even good looks, of any kind; but it has the cheerful countenance of a well-built, commodious, comfortable abode; and it is placed on the edge of an upland lawn, partially embosomed by beechwoods, but commanding, from its gentle eminence, a spacious prospect of rich English landscape open to the horizon. On that side of the house which is turned from the road, glass doors give access from the principal ground-floor sitting-rooms to a terraced flower garden. The garden is

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bounded at the back by masses of beech trees, and the front of it overhangs a broad sweep of mingled meadow and woodland. The interior arrangements of Woodcot House are now adapted to the scholastic requirements of some forty or more young gentlemen, who may be congratulated on the beauty of the scenery in which they are pursuing their studies.

The domain of Woodcot, belonging to the Duff family, includes, besides the pleasure grounds, a small acreage of pasture. For nearly half a century its occupants have been the master and pupils of the school now kept by the Rev. Hubert Nind, and previously by his father (the present vicar of South Stoke, Oxon). From the information kindly furnished me by these gentlemen it appears that the house has not been altered in any of its external features since the evening of the 29th of August, 1827, when it was first inhabited by my father and mother, as what the advertisement of their marriage grandiloquently called 'their seat in Oxfordshire.' My father speaks of the place in a letter to his mother as 'exceedingly retired.' It is so now, and must have been still more secluded in the days when railroads were unknown. The spot was well suited to the requirements of a literary student; being near enough to London for quick reference to the public libraries of the metropolis and easy intercourse with the literary world, and yet sufficiently remote from the nearest provincial town to secure immunity from unsolicited local society. The house, however, was unnecessarily large for any newly married couple; and the rent of house and grounds together must, on the most moderate computation, have exceeded any income on which its occupants could then have reckoned from sources less precarious than the prospects of literary labour.

At the time of his marriage, my father's fortune consisted only of a small capital of 4,000*l.*, secured to him by my grandfather's will, and subsequently raised to 6,000*l.* by a decision of the Court of Chancery. He at the same time became

entitled to the third part of a small gavelkind property. Part of the money left to him by his father he had invested in the purchase of his unattached ensigncy, but he sold out the year after his marriage. His wife's fortune consisted of a little property in Limerick, encumbered by a jointure to her mother, which reduced the income derived from it to about 80*l.* a year. He had no claim to any pension from his mother, whose estate was entirely at her own disposal; and, having married contrary to her wishes, he had no pecuniary assistance to expect from her. The large allowance she had hitherto made him he resigned from the day of his wedding, saying, 'As I bake so will I brew.' In one of his first letters to her on the subject of his engagement, he says, 'Instead of diminishing or embarrassing, I have increased my income, even without counting the money I make by writing.'

He was, throughout life, not only a careful manager, but also a skilful maker, of money. Yet, even at a time when life was twice as cheap as it is now, no man could possibly have paid the rent of a rather large country house near London, keeping at the same time a carriage and two or three saddle horses, and entertaining constantly, out of an income of 500*l.* And though he appears to have contracted some debts, his correspondence shows that they were not more than he was able to pay off in the third year of his marriage, without pecuniary assistance either from his mother or his elder brother. I gather from my mother's letters that at that time she and my father were living in London at the rate of not less than 3,000*l.* a year; and certainly the chief part of that annual expenditure must have been covered by the proceeds of literary labour.

One other source of income, which was also a means of amusement, may be mentioned; though this could not have availed him, either for recreation or profit, till he settled in London, two years later. 'Play,' says Goethe, 'is much to be recommended to young people, especially to those who have a practical sense, and wish to look out in the world for

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themselves.' And, after describing how he studied both whist and piquet, in order that he might procure for himself 'much pleasure and greater freedom in society' than he could have otherwise enjoyed, he observes that those who would qualify themselves for the enjoyment of general society 'should not avoid social games, but rather strive after a certain dexterity in them; inasmuch as time is infinitely long, and each day a vessel into which much may be poured if one will truly fill it up.'[1]

Now my father, who was of the same opinion, mentions in his Autobiography that he inherited from his grandmother a love of cards. He was at no time a gamester; for, as I have already had occasion to observe, he had neither the advantages nor the defects of the sanguine temperament. He was therefore without a passion which owes its fascination more to chance than calculation. But he found in the combinations of card-playing a pleasant stimulant to the faculties of observation and judgment, which were at all times active in his nature. In games of cards, moreover, it is necessary, at least for the habitual player, to study not only the cards themselves, and the various combinations of which they are capable, but also the peculiarities of the persons who play them; which, in itself, had for him an inexhaustible interest. He played, by instinct, on the principle which Saville (in his novel of 'Godolphin') commends from experience. But the things we begin to do with a liking for them we generally end by doing well. Whist and piquet were the games my father relished and studied most, because in them the result depends more upon skill than luck; and, from practice and aptitude combined, he soon became, not a first-rate, but an exceedingly good, whistplayer, to a degree which made his winnings an appreciable addition to his income.

Thus, the fortune on which my father married had no other sources than his well-stored portfolio, his teeming brain, and his indefatigable industry. Although he had contracted

[1] *Dichtung und Wahrheit.* Oxenford's translation. Books viii. and ix.

from the roving habits of his boyhood a love, not lost in later years, of wandering about the country, often in disguise, and mingling as an obscure traveller with all conditions of people (whose peculiarities he observed as a landscape painter observes the picturesque in scenery), yet there was nothing Bohemian in his domestic tastes. He liked his house to be decent and graceful, his table well served, and his establishment efficient and orderly. He had a remarkable faculty for making money go far, and getting the most out of it. He never purchased anything he did not want, and was at great pains, when supplying his needs, to procure exactly the thing he required. He was a good bargainer, and a careful account-keeper; and I never knew any man better able to live well on little means, without shabbiness or debt.

Persons of imaginative disposition, and those who are much absorbed in the contemplation of abstract ideas, must, as a rule, be ill fitted to carry on successfully the daily pinching and haggling, which are indispensable to the graceful ordering of an establishment supported on a slender income. But there is nothing in which my father more differed from the common type of the literary character than his interest in such domestic details, and his capacity of dealing with them.

With an instinctive *Lust zu fabuliren*, he turned them all to literary account. Thus, I find among the essays and tales published anonymously during his first five or six years of literary drudgery, and never afterwards collected or acknowledged by him, several upon such subjects as 'Domesticity, or a Dissertation upon Servants,' 'House-hunting,' 'Peculiarities of London Tradesmen,' 'Dining-rooms,' 'Small Gardens,' 'The Kitchen and the Parlour, or Household Politics,' 'Long Journeys with Short Purses.'

But the management of his household expenditure was now naturally made over to his wife. It was his part to make money, hers to spend or to husband it; and unfor-

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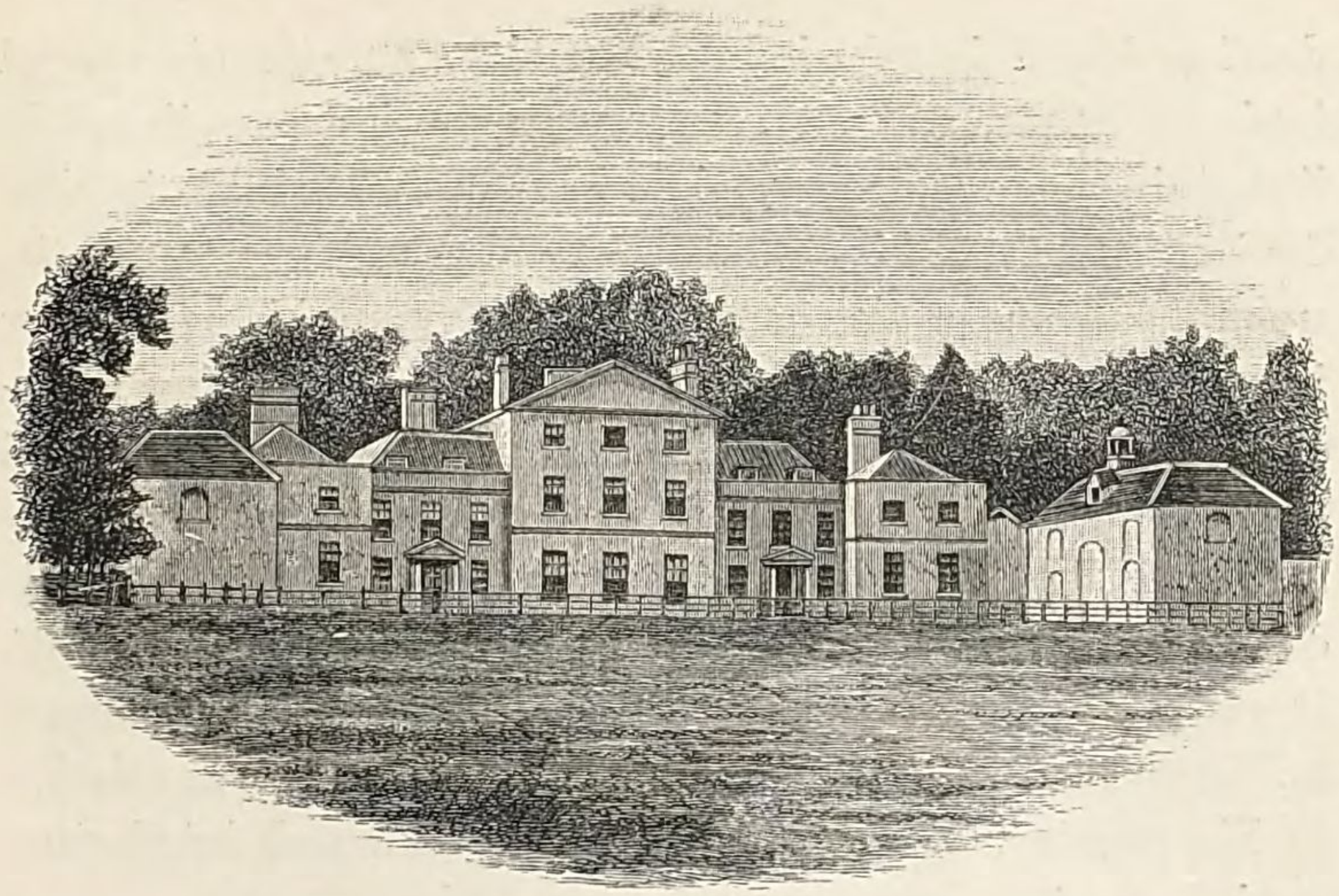
tunately she had no idea of its value, and was quite incapable of managing it. Account-keeping was a burden to her soul. To her friend, Miss Greene, she wrote from Woodcot: 'Mrs. —— says that a woman who is always occupied with other things cannot properly attend to the management of her house; but I say that a woman who is always occupied about the management of her house cannot properly attend to other things. For my part, I know I should be sorry to spend more than half an hour every morning on the management of the largest establishment that ever was; and if I am not, like your sublime friend, "a highly talented woman," it must be my own fault; for I have nothing to do all day but cultivate my mind, and I never suffer myself to be troubled, if I can help it, with the vile details of household affairs. However, I have promised Edward to go to town next week to help him to choose a cook; and I cannot tell you how sorry I am at the idea of leaving my beautiful violets and "the yellow cowslips," to be mewed up in an hotel, and become, myself, "a pale prim Rose."' This distaste, in my mother's disposition, to the household functions devolving on a poor man's wife, and, in my father's habits, a curious mixture of refinement and frugality, were a latent source of future disappointments upon both sides. Such disappointments could not, of themselves, have any serious effect upon the affection which retarded them. But they were calculated, as time went on, to aggravate any distress occasioned by more important divergences of character.



WOODCOT (BACK VIEW).

CHAPTER V.

LIFE AT WOODCOT. 1827–8. ÆT. 24–5.

THE room my father had selected for his study at Woodcot was a small one on the ground floor, overlooking the lawn. And here I may mention that, whatever the size of his house, it was invariably one of the smallest rooms in it that he appropriated to himself as his literary workshop. Small enclosures are more easily fortified than large ones, and his study was his castle; no less inaccessible to the world outside it than the mountain keep of a mediæval baron. He was a moderately early riser, generally up and about by 8 A.M. It was his habit to walk at all seasons, and in all weathers, for nearly an hour before breakfast. From breakfast till luncheon, at half-past one or two o'clock, the time was devoted to composition and correspondence. He was a punctual correspondent; a rapid, and to his few intimate friends a voluminous, letter-writer. During his first years of authorship, he composed slowly and laboriously; afterwards, with great rapidity, rarely correcting a line. He had a taste strongly

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developed and largely indulged (which, but for his careful business habits, and an economy amounting sometimes, in little things, to parsimony, might have proved ruinous to him) for building, furnishing, and decorating. This taste was the natural outcome of his constructive faculty and his passion for improvement. He was always inventing or developing something: his mind and body, by the fullest cultivation of all their faculties; his property and income, by the careful study and bold investment of all their resources. Nor was this desire for improvement confined to what belonged to himself. It extended no less actively to all that he himself belonged to. It animated his interest, and guided his action, in relation to his country, his age, and all the social and intellectual conditions of the human world around him.

Herein lies the explanation of his political views and opinions. He abhorred the politics of destruction and disintegration. The most trifling relics of his childhood were tenaciously preserved by him, with a strong sentiment of conservation. He altered and improved much; but rarely destroyed anything, however useless it might be. He had a profound respect for continuity; and, having great aspirations, but no envy, there was in him nothing of the revolutionist. But he was an ardent reformer wherever he recognised a rational promise of practical improvement. The same tendency occasioned, in early life, his dandyism and love of dress. To make the most and best of his personal appearance seemed to him no less an obligation of self-respect than to make the most and best of his intellectual powers, his moral capacities, and his physical faculties. He was a frequent purchaser of houses and properties, which he invariably resold at a considerable profit on his outlay in improving them. Had he lived in a hovel, he would have contrived to embellish it; and there are few places occupied by him for any length of time on which he did not leave, in some beautified feature or added convenience, the stamp of his creative fancy.

He was at all times a temperate, not to say abstemious,

eater and drinker; and, although his taste, like that of his first hero, Pelham, was fastidious, his appetite, unlike that of his last hero, Kenelm Chillingly, was very small. In later life, he had contracted the habit, common to most students and solitary men, of rushing through his meals with an impatient rapidity which would have shocked the gastronomic conscience of Lord Guloseton. His breakfast generally consisted of a piece of dry toast and a cup of cold tea, or hot tea impatiently tossed into a tumbler half full of cold water; the remains of which he generally carried away with him into his study—stalking out of the room, silent, preoccupied, in dressing-gown and slippers (dressing-gown long and flowing, and slippers the most slip-shod), with staring eyes like those of a sleep-walker.[1] His

[1] In an essay (published anonymously) 'upon breakfasts,' he says: 'Of all meals, breakfast is treated most like a friend of the family, for how many hours do we keep it waiting! We could not behave cooler to it, if it were the person we loved best in the world. But then, we are more at home in its company; we receive it in our dressing-gown and slippers; loll over it with a book; muse in its company upon the state of our finances, or the business of the day; suffer it to survey us in our solitude; and "to know us" (what other meal doth this?) "exactly for what we are." How connected is it with our studies, how woven with our amusements! It is the nurse of a myriad essays; it is worthy of an essay itself, and it shall have one.' . . . 'I love to read of the matutinal habits of great men, especially of those who live in the country, and are early risers. I like to know what a fine mind does with itself after a return to this world from the haunted palaces of dreams. For my part, I never consider dreams as things not to be remembered. I look at them as the mirrors of such thoughts as lie half-shaped and embryo in the mind—thoughts that we should not recognise as our own but for those spectral reflections. Often are we dimly unaware how certain prepossessions are seizing and advancing on our minds, till we are startled to find them tyrannising over our sleep. I first knew that I loved the person in the world I have loved most, by seeing her for ever in my dreams. I first knew that I hated the person against whom, for three years afterwards, I burnt with an unquenchable revenge, by dreaming night after night that I was engaged with him in mortal conflict. Ah, from what guilty thoughts and evil passions might we save ourselves in the day did we more seriously acknowledge the monitors of the night!' . . . 'And therefore it is that I have a curious interest in learning how imaginative men, of a certain age, pass the first hours after waking. I like to hear of Scott dashing, at sunrise, through the dripping woods upon his shaggy pony. I like to read of Rousseau, in his old age, loitering, at early day, by the lake that nourished his immortal "reveries." I picture to myself the wild, yet tranquil, and half-developed images that flitted athwart the mind of Goethe, as he paused for long minutes by some flower yet wet with the early

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dinner, when he dined alone, rarely lasted ten minutes. He was an incessant smoker. Whatever the result of his morning's work, it seldom left, in his manner, any perceptible trace of preoccupation when once he had put it aside. The rest of the afternoon, till four o'clock, was generally employed in exercise or social intercourse, riding, driving, walking, or visiting.

At the time I am speaking of, people dined early; and six o'clock was, I believe, the customary dinner hour at Woodcot. Literary work was resumed from four to six, and from ten till twelve, or later; but these last hours were more generally passed in reading than in writing.

Such was the author's ordinary working day at Woodcot; but what he accomplished there must have called for many hours of extra toil; and later, as his life became more solitary, it was also more sedentary. Addressing a boys' school in the year 1854, he himself thus described his hours and methods of work:—

> Don't think me guilty of egotism if I venture to give you my own experience. Many persons—seeing me so much engaged in active life, and as much about the world as if I had never been a student—have said to me 'When do you get the time to write all your books? How on earth do you contrive to do so much work?' I shall perhaps surprise you by the answer I make. The answer is this, 'I contrive to do so much, by never doing too much at a time.'

dews. The beings of the mind are more chastened and spiritualised while fresh from the bath of dreams, before the low cares and petty troubles of the day begin. But we are in the garden—return we home. The lattice, reaching to the grass, is open—your light repast prepared—your favourite book beside you—your dog at your feet—the projects of the day lie, like a map, before you. Everything in a country life is calm and certain; and, if you are worthy of that life, your own thoughts can preserve you from monotony. The author should not live in towns. In them his soul does not sufficiently feel its majesty. And yet it is in cities that most of us are condemned to live and to struggle on.'

I regret that I cannot here reproduce the whole of this very characteristic, and quite unknown, essay; for in it my father has caressingly described many of his own habits, dispositions, and sentiments—to which the house, the grounds, and the surrounding scenery of Woodcot were thoroughly congenial. But it contains one very beautiful sentence which I cannot forbear adding to what I have already quoted from it. The italics are my own. 'I question if men would ever smile, had they never seen the face of Nature—*it is an expression that we catch from her.*'

A man, to get through work well, must not overwork himself—or if he do too much to-day, the re-action of fatigue will come, and he will be obliged to do too little to-morrow. Now, since I began really and earnestly to study, which was not till I had left college and was actually in the world, I may perhaps say that I have gone through as large a course of general reading as most men of my time. I have travelled much, I have mixed much in politics and in the various business of life, and in addition to this, I have published somewhere above sixty volumes, some upon subjects requiring much special research. And what time do you think, as a general rule, I have devoted to study—to reading and writing? Not more than three hours a-day, and when parliament is sitting not always that. But then, during those hours I have given my whole attention to what I was about. Thus, you see it does not require so very much time at a stretch to get through a considerable amount of brain work, but it requires application regularly and daily continued. If you pour once a week a whole bucketful of water on a stone, you leave no impression behind. But if you continually let fall a drop on the stone, the proverb tells you that you wear a hole in it at last.

When a certain political adventurer who had made his way through all the prisons of Europe was asked how he managed it, he said, 'A very small file will eat through iron bars, if you file an hour or two every night,' and so, in the stern dungeons of mortal ignorance, file at the bars—steadily when alone; and no prison can detain you long from escape into free air and celestial light.

This account, however, demands copious qualification. During the composition of the historical romance of 'Harold,' which was completed in less than a month, it is no exaggeration to say that my father was engaged upon it nearly day and night for more than three weeks. His work was no less continuous during the composition of 'Lucretia,' and 'The Caxtons;' 'Kenelm Chillingly,' and 'The Parisians;' books of which the first two and the last two were written simultaneously. This species of incessant literary toil must have been begun almost immediately after his settlement at Woodcot.

Between the years 1827 and 1837, he produced twelve novels, two poems, one political pamphlet, one play, the whole

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of the work entitled 'England and the English,' three complete volumes of his 'History of Athens,' of which only two have ever been published, and all the essays and tales collected in 'The Student.'

These acknowledged publications represent only a portion of the literary labour. For throughout the greater part of that time, he was writing anonymously in the 'Edinburgh Review,' the 'Westminster Review,' the 'New Monthly Magazine,' the 'Monthly Chronicle,' the 'Examiner,' the 'Literary Gazette,' and other newspapers. And for a great part of the time he was also an active member of Parliament, to say nothing of studies to which he did not give the name of work. In later life the circumstances which deprived him of domestic companionship made books his constant board and bed companions; and, even when neither writing nor reading, he was still thinking hard. It was his daily habit, at least in the country, to take long solitary rides and walks, which gave him just as much mental as bodily exercise; for all the while he was either planning out some work, or brooding over some recent course of reading.

Among his most private papers I have found a criticism on his own character (written at the age of forty-three, and for himself only) in which he says:—

> Thought is continually flowing through my mind. I scarcely know a moment in which I am awake, and not thinking. Nor, by thought, do I mean mere reverie or castle-building; but a sustained process of thinking. I have always in my mind some distinct train of ideas which I seek to develop, or some positive truth which I am trying to arrive at. If I lived for a million years, I could not exhaust a millionth part of my thoughts. I know that I must be immortal, if only because I think.

And elsewhere in the same paper he adds:—

> I have an intense belief in the generative virtue of labour; and I look upon genius as concentration of thought upon one point at a time. I do not believe that true genius is confined in its sphere of operation. It is only because few men of genius concentrate as

much labour of thought on one point as on another that they are not equally successful in every intellectual effort. CHAP. V.

ÆT. 24-5

Fortunately for his accomplishment of the many tasks my father undertook, he had a quickly recuperative constitution, a strong active frame, and an elastic temperament. For, though subject to fits of intense depression, and an irritability which sometimes rendered him absolutely unapproachable, yet no sooner was he relieved from the burden of mental worry or bodily pain, than his spirits rebounded into an exuberant sunny vivacity. He became, to all appearance, as light-hearted and easily pleased as a boy; and was capable of taking the most joyous delight in the simplest pleasures and occupations.

But, three years after his marriage, he began to receive warnings (repeatedly neglected) that his health was seriously impaired by the strain he had put upon it. 'I fear there is no chance of Edward getting better,' wrote my mother in 1831 to Mrs. Bulwer Lytton, 'for he undertakes a degree of labour that, positively, without exaggeration, no three persons could have the health and time to achieve. So incessantly is he occupied, that I seldom or never see him, till about two or three in the morning, for five minutes. And it is no use for me to tell him that he will only defeat all the objects of his life by attempting more than he can compass. Poor fellow! my remonstrances only irritate him.'

Still he went on toiling without a moment's rest or relaxation; and two years later, towards the end of 1833, his health fairly broke down. 'Edward,' my mother wrote again to my grandmother, 'leaves Paris next Monday, and is coming home. Poor fellow, he complains sadly of his health, but owns (which he never would before) that he has been overworked, and must at last take rest.'

It was then that he and my mother went to Italy. But *post equitem sedet atra cura*. The temporary release from labour involved no cessation of the causes which made labour the necessity of his life. The change of scene and air, however,

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partially restored his health; the creative activity of his mind revived, and, taking fresh impressions from the influence of Italy, poured itself forth in a new series of compositions marked by an imaginative power richer and fuller than that of all his previous romances.

Whilst the mental toil, then resumed, went on without pause, the condition of his domestic life was a never-ceasing cause of intolerable suffering to him. Every year was silently accumulating a tremendous debt to nature; and at last that patient creditor exacted her dues with heavy interest. The crash came in 1844. The wrung nerves revenged themselves upon the tyranny of the exacting brain; and before he had fared halfway upon the journey of his life, the spent traveller sank prostrate under the burdens heaped on burdens he had borne so bravely and so long. My father's 'Confessions of a Water-patient' (published in 1845) contain a passage which is a significant contrast to the one I have quoted from his school speech of 1854:—

I have been (he says) a workman in my day. I began to write, and to toil, and to win some kind of a name, which I had the ambition to improve, while yet little more than a boy. With a strong love for the study of books, and with a yet greater desire to accomplish myself in the knowledge of men, for sixteen years I can conceive no life to have been more filled by occupation than mine. What time was not given to action was given to study; what time not given to study, to action—labour in both! To a constitution naturally far from strong, I allowed no pause nor respite. The wear and tear went on without intermission—the whirl of the wheel never ceased.

Sometimes, indeed, thoroughly overpowered and exhausted, I sought for escape. The physicians said 'Travel,' and I travelled. 'Go into the country,' and I went. But at such attempts at repose all my ailments gathered round me—made themselves far more palpable and felt. I had no resource but to fly from myself—to fly into the other world of books, or thought, or reverie—to live in some state of being less painful than my own. As long as I was always at work it seemed that I had no leisure to be ill. Quiet was my hell.

At length the frame thus long neglected—patched up for a while

by drugs and doctors—put off and trifled with as an intrusive dun—like a dun who is in his rights—brought in its arrears—crushing and terrible—accumulated through long years. Worn out and wasted, the constitution seemed wholly inadequate to meet the demand.

The exhaustion of toil and study had been completed by great anxiety and grief. I had watched with alternate hope and fear the lingering and mournful death-bed of my nearest relation and dearest friend—of the person around whom was entwined the strongest affection my life had known: and when all was over, I seemed scarcely to live myself.

At this time, about the January of 1844, I was thoroughly shattered. The least attempt at exercise exhausted me. The nerves gave way at the most ordinary excitement—a chronic irritation of that vast surface we call the mucous membrane, which had defied for years all medical skill, rendered me continually liable to acute attacks, which from their repetition, and the increased feebleness of my frame, might at any time be fatal. Though free from any organic disease of the heart, its action was morbidly restless and painful. My sleep was without refreshment. At morning I rose more weary than I laid down to rest.

But to return to Woodcot. Its first visitor was my mother's early friend, Miss Greene, whom she had invited to stay there with her during her confinement, and who came from Ireland for that purpose. Miss Greene thus describes her first impressions of my father:—

> Mr. Bulwer came for me in his carriage. The first sight of him pleased me much; but I said to myself, 'he is too young.' For, young as he was, he looked still younger. We had an hour's drive, however, from Nettlebed; and in the course of it I found him singularly agreeable: his manners not at all those of the boy he looked, but of an experienced man of the world, and his conversation charming—very original, but thoroughly unaffected. He talked with great admiration and affection of his beautiful wife. It was nearly dark when we drove up the lawn. In the hall I was met by the handsomest woman I have ever seen. She and her husband seemed devoted to each other.

After my mother's confinement, my eldest uncle, who was then lately married, came with his wife to stay at Woodcot;

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and throughout the whole period of their residence there my father and mother were seldom without long visits from their friends and acquaintances in London.

Two permanent members of the Woodcot household may be mentioned here. One was a little Blenheim bitch given by my father to my mother, who was extremely attached to it. The little dog was her constant companion, and its name, Fairy, she had printed upon tiny visiting cards, which she used to leave, with her own, upon her friends and neighbours.[1] The other was a large black Newfoundland, named Terror. This dog was a literary character, for he figures in 'Pelham,' as the inseparable companion of Sir Reginald Glanville.[2]

My father's marriage did not involve any lengthened interruption of correspondence with his friend at Paris. On January 14, 1828, he wrote to Mrs. Cunningham from London, where he was already house-hunting:

[1] She was deeply afflicted by the death of this little animal, which occurred about the same time as that of Mr. Wyndham Lewes, the first husband of the late Lady Beaconsfield; to whom she wrote a letter of condolence on that event, comparing their respective losses, and lamenting her own as being, in the nature of things, the heaviest and most irreparable of the two.

[2] 'The other evening I was coming home from one of Sir Lionel's preserves and had sent the keeper on before, in order more undisturbedly to——'

'Con witticisms for dinner,' said Wormwood.

'To make out the meaning of Mr. Wormwood's last work,' continued Vincent. 'My shortest way lay through that churchyard, about a mile hence, which is such a lion in this ugly part of the country because it has three thistles and a tree. Just as I got there I saw a man suddenly rise from the earth, where he appeared to have been lying. He stood still for a moment, and then (evidently not perceiving me) raised his clasped hands to heaven, and muttered some words I could not hear distinctly. As I approached nearer to him (which I did with no very pleasant sensations) a large black dog, that had till then remained *couchant*, sprang towards me with a loud growl—

"Sonat hic de nare canina
Litera,"

as Persius has it. I was too terrified to move—

"Obstupui steteruntque comæ,"

and I should infallibly have been converted into dog's meat if our acquaintance had not started from his reverie, called his dog by the very appropriate name of Terror, and then, slouching his hat over his face, passed rapidly by me, dog and all, &c.'—*Pelham*, chap. iv. and *passim*.

My dear Friend,—Many thanks for your obliging letter. You mistake the account of our correspondence. It stands thus. Two letters from me produced at the end of six months one from you. I resolve to take the same time in answering, when I get your second. But meanwhile, I take compassion on you, and write. It will give me the greatest pleasure to see you in England, more especially at Woodcot; and my wife will be most happy to make your acquaintance. So pray come and visit us. And the sooner the visit, the greater the favour. In August, indeed, I shall probably leave Woodcot; having then finished the term I originally proposed to myself for 'retirement.' I shall then, in all probability, spend a great part of the year in London, or its immediate neighbourhood. Indeed, I have been spending the last three weeks here in searching for a house. But in vain. Houses are so dreadfully dear in town. There are some places, I see in the map of London, on the other side of that great boundary of the civilised world, Oxford St., called Portman Square and Portland Place, or some such names, where houses are rather, but not much, cheaper. Perhaps, as I am a sort of recluse, I may therefore select a hermitage in either of those spots. I had the pleasure of seeing Cuthbert to-day at Brooks's Club. Charming youth he is. I hear Schoenfeldt is dead. That could not make much difference in him: he never seemed quite alive. Cradock I had a glimpse of the other day. He was . . . as good-looking as ever. Adieu.

The Same to the Same.

Woodcot, April 8, 1828.

My dear Friend,—Your letter gave me great pleasure. But that I need not tell you. As to your affirmation of being not my debtor but rather my creditor, in our epistolary balance, I yield an incredulous assent. *Se non è vero, è ben trovato.* You are right in your cautionary admonitions. It is quite astonishing what a false interpreter the world is. We live in an atmosphere of lies; and whatever we breathe becomes a lie directly it is breathed by another. Lies, lies, lies, wherever one turns! I begin to believe, with Bishop Berkeley, that the world itself is a lie, and that there is nothing true in the universe but one's own mind. At all events, there never was a wiser precept than that which advises us to live with our friends as if they were one day to be our enemies. Pity that, like all these sayings, it is so unpleasant to practise. I would sooner be always calumniated than always suspicious. I thank you for wishing

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to know my Rose. You would like her much. Indeed, she is so good, amiable, and warm-hearted, that it would be impossible not to like her. I say nothing about her beauty, but that you shall one day judge of yourself. Meanwhile, she is in your style. Dark hair, bright complexion, dazzling teeth. My quiet woodlands, as you call them, are anything but tame. They are so wild and waste that you might imagine yourself in a desert. Judge how delightful such scenery is to me.

Directly my new book is out, I will send it to you. As also the other two, 'Falkland,' and 'The Rebel.' The latter, a poem, has been translated into French, and has, I am told, had great success in France.[1]

The former has horror-stricken the Prudes and Canters. I am anxious to console myself by your opinion of it, for I am in hopes that you, who have felt, will find in it the only merit I claim for it—*truth* in the delineation of feeling. Its fault is that it is too stilted. That is a fault in the style, not in the sentiment of it. But one does not become perfect in a day. Don't frighten me with your malevolent predictions of a numerous tribe. Nothing is so hideously uninteresting as an author with a large family. Tell me what you think of Leigh Hunt's 'Life of Byron.' People here are furious against it. My brother is settled in our neighbourhood. His wife is a very nice creature, and a great friend of Rose's. 'Interesting news!' you will say. But what better can you expect from a hermit who sees less of the living than the Egyptian Sorcerer saw of the dead; that is to say, one a month? Your account of Miss Cunningham's health gives me the greatest pain. So beautiful and innocent as she is, it is impossible not to feel deeply interested in her. Pray remember me most respectfully and truly to her, and let me hope that your next letter will assure me of her convalescence.

God bless you, and yours,

E. L. B.

[1] In the foreign correspondence of one of the daily papers of this year (1828) I find the following, dated Paris, March 21:—'You will be gratified to hear that your young bard, Mr. Lytton Bulwer, is duly appreciated in this country. It must be allowed that no nation is more liberal of praise, where it is merited, than this; and envy, the attribute of little minds, seems to be almost unknown amongst men of genius here. Of Mr. Bulwer they say, "La manière de Bulwer ressemble beaucoup à celle de Byron; mais il l'imite sans le copier. Le talent sait rajeunir comme il sait créer, et l'un n'est ni moins difficile ni moins glorieux que l'autre." The translation of '*The Rebel*' has already passed through two editions.'

CHAPTER VI.

ESTRANGEMENT BETWEEN MOTHER AND SON. 1827–8. ÆT. 24–5.

MEANWHILE my grandmother remained unreconciled to her son's marriage. Her door was closed to both husband and wife. The estrangement between mother and son was complete, and the bitterness with which the son felt it is shown by the following letters:—

Edward Bulwer to his Mother.

Woodcot, near Nettlebed, Oxfordshire: September 22, 1827.

My dearest Mother,—I heard from Henry with the greatest regret that I had offended you by sending you cake. The fact is, I could not bear the idea that you and your most intimate friend, Mrs. Sherbrooke, should be the only persons I knew to whom that compliment was not to be paid; and therefore (contrary to Rose's opinion, who was afraid you *might* be offended) I wrote your name with my own hand. Pray forgive me if this *did* offend you. I assure you it was an error of judgment, and not done without great consideration. For God's sake write to me one line—to say something—not *very* harsh!

The place I have come to is exceedingly retired, and affords every facility for living according to my fortune. I hope the land will pay for the house. I do not like to write more now. But I could not help writing one line of remembrance, and to implore you to let me hear from you. God bless and keep you.

Your most affectionate son,

E. L. B.

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The Same to the Same.

Woodcot: September 29, 1827.

My dearest Mother,—Although I have not heard from you—not even one line—I cannot help intruding myself again upon you, to say how sorry I am at the inconvenience you must feel at the death of Cornwall,[1] of which I only heard the day before yesterday. It would give me great, very great, pleasure to hear how you are, though it were but one word only. But I do not wish to force myself on your recollection. Of myself I say nothing, convinced that all which relates to me will be uninteresting to you. I do not, however, and I never can, cease to be, with every good wish and warm remembrance,

Your most affectionate son,

E. L. B.

The Same to the Same.

Woodcot: October 19, 1827.

My dearest Mother,—As you spoke to me about my books when I last saw you before my marriage, I suppose they must be in your way now. I should be very much obliged if you would kindly send them to me whenever it suits your convenience. The waggon will be their best conveyance; and perhaps your butler would be good enough to see them booked, and let me know when they leave London or elsewhere for this place. I was a little comforted to hear from my brothers that you are well, and am, my dearest mother,

Your ever affectionate son,

E. L. B.

The Same to the Same.

Marshall Thomson's Hotel: November, 1827.

I cannot leave town without writing to you one line. I am deeply unhappy that you have not only refused to see me, but that you still refuse even to hold any kind of direct communication with me. Perhaps hereafter, when you do more justice to yourself, your own kind feelings will be more just to me also. But, after all allowance for any natural anger and disappointment, I cannot but feel that your conduct to me is more than harsh. It is unjust.

[1] Her agent.

All my letters unanswered. All your messages to me of the most uncompromising nature, and made in the most contemptuous terms. The very least memorial of me returned as if to exclude from your house every relic, and from your thoughts every remembrance, of me. And your door inexorably shut in my face. This is the last time I shall mention or revert to these things. If I have a right to feel, I have none to intrude; and I will do so no more.

You cannot, however, but be sensible that, if I really *have* erred in the action which has offended you, that action brings with it its own punishment; and that such implacable unforgiveness on your part is no more required as an addition to the many evils and privations I must have to contend with, than it can possibly be judged hereafter by your juster and gentler feelings, as a duty to yourself.

If, also, at any time previous to my marriage, my happiness made your motive for dissenting from it (as you led me to believe), it is quite clear that this motive could not dictate the unmitigated harshness you adopt. For, if I am unhappy, that motive would make you sympathise with, rather than exclude, me: and, if happy, your object is gained.

E. L. B.

This letter effected no change for the better in my father's relations with his mother. The year closed on their continued estrangement. Early in the following year, he was under the necessity of parting with a little mare, which had once been admired by my grandmother. The occasion suggested to him the opportunity of making further efforts at reconciliation.

Three years ago (what an age ago it now appears!) you seemed to have taken a fancy to 'Lady,' and offered to buy her, should I ever wish to part with her. I would not sell her then, nor will I sell her now to *anyone*. But I cannot afford to keep her longer, and there is only one person to whom I would like to give her. Will you accept her? If so, I will send her to town by the first safe opportunity. If you will but write me one word, my address is still Woodcot, near Nettlebed, Oxon.

This letter elicited an answer, but the answer was sore and reproachful. He replied to it from town:—

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Marshall Thomson's Hotel: Saturday.

I have this moment received your letter, which was forwarded to me from Woodcot. Although you say that all further correspondence between us would be painful to you, yet I cannot be the first to drop it. Nor can I resist expressing the great gratification that any opening, even so faint a one as your letter, affords me.

I am truly and deeply sensible of your former kindness and affection: and, although I cannot look upon past events with any feeling that I have acted towards you with the ingratitude and want of affection for which you condemn me, yet I have not been free from self-reproach, nor have I suffered myself to indulge that satisfaction in my choice which, with *your* approbation, I should have felt. I regret, deeply regret, that I ever gave you a promise I was afterwards unable to keep. But, at least, the promise shows how earnestly I meant to comply with your wishes when it was given. Reflect for one moment whether you or I have been the sacrifice. What did you lose? Nothing. What did I lose? Everything. You put the question wrong when you say that you offered me the choice between relinquishing Rose and relinquishing you. It was not Rose you asked me to relinquish. It was my duty to Rose. You think I have mistaken my duty. But even so, you cannot think me misled by the promptings of self-interest or self-indulgence. I have relinquished fortune, freedom, ambition, enjoyment—all except my sense of truth and right. Could you esteem me if I had relinquished these? If not, why do you now seek to deprive me of my only consolations, my best titles, if not to your affection, at least to your esteem?

If I said I would receive nothing from you when I married, do justice to the obvious meaning of my words—words I would still repeat; and let me put aside from both our minds all idea of 'interest' and 'advantage.' I assure you that all I ask, all I desire, is that exchange of affection and good-will which I now implore you not to renounce.

But, if I said I would not see you after I married, suffer me to retract and recall words which could only have arisen in that warmth and eagerness of temper so habitual to me, and let me assure you that I feel it is something more than a hardship to find myself excluded from your house.

For the rest, I would wish to avoid all appearance of speaking rather to your feelings than to your judgment. Why do you think

it wise to look only at what has offended or disappointed you in my conduct? Why, even if you will concentrate all your observation only on these aspects of it, do you refuse to take into consideration those extenuating circumstances, or to admit those redeeming motives, of which even the worst errors are not wholly destitute? Look round the world. Where do you find in it that perfection of judgment you require, or that warmth of heart you reject, in your son? Is Society so full of affectionate ties, of enduring remembrances, of tender associations, that we can afford to squander them away, or shut our hearts upon those we have loved, and who love us, even for greater cause of offence than any I have given you? Was not the father in the Parable (I do not mention this as an authority, for I do not believe all that you believe, I mention it only as an illustration), but was not he held out to us as a wise example, though his son had sinned against him? Did he shut the door upon that son's advances and return? Did he not think there is far more joy in reconciliation than in the remembrance of offences?

I should now conclude this letter if I did not think it right to say one word, so far as it concerns yourself, about one whose feelings I have now the most intimate opportunities of knowing.

In spite of all your opposition to our marriage, in spite of all the garrulous officiousness of those *third persons* who are always ready to retail stories from one to another, in spite of wounded feelings which might be termed natural and human, I assure you that Rose has never spoken of, or alluded to you, otherwise than in terms of good will and respect. Nor has she ever ceased to lament the breach our marriage has occasioned between you and myself. God bless and preserve you.

E. L. B.

This letter found Mrs. Bulwer Lytton very unwell. It consequently remained unanswered, and a few weeks later her son wrote to her again :—

Edward Bulwer to his Mother.

Woodcot: April 28, 1828.

I regret that it was only by accident, and through a third person, I heard of your late illness. Believe me, I have been most sincerely affected by it. I do trust you will let me know how you are. I only ask for one line totally confined to the state of your health. I cannot think you will refuse me this. There are times when one

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easily forgets all one has imagined harsh or unjust, and this is one. I will not say more now. But I assure you that I am, with unabated truth,

Your most affectionate son,

E. L. B.

The Same to the Same.

Woodcot: May 6, 1828.

My dear Mother,—About eight or nine days ago I wrote to you, expressing my great regret at hearing of your late illness, and begged you to let me have a line to say how you were. I have been led lately to fear, from some mistakes between my servant and the postman, that this letter may not have reached you. I therefore write again; but only to repeat how much I was grieved by the news I received, and how anxiously I trust that you will not refuse to let me know how you are, if only by a single line. I assure you that I am, with the greatest truth,

Your very affectionate son,

E. L. B.

The Same to the Same.

London (undated).

William[1] yesterday informed me of your message respecting my calling. Had I received it before, I would not have intruded myself unasked in Seymour Street. I am now in town again till Saturday, having come here for the purpose of selling a book. If you will see me during any part of my stay in London, I need not say how happy it will make me. And, if you wish it, I will not say a word about past circumstances.

My dear, dear mother, I do assure you that in this request I am wholly actuated by motives of affection which I beseech you not to disregard.

E. L. B.

The Same to the Same.

Woodcot: May 29, 1828.

Your message to me through Henry[2] gave me the greatest concern. I only heard accidentally that you had been unwell. Directly on hearing it, I wrote to you. I wrote also to others. I made inquiries from everyone who could tell me of your health. And, although I will say openly, for I feel it deeply, that I look

[1] His eldest brother.

[2] His second brother.

upon myself as one wronged to the extreme in your opinion, yet I can truly add that I felt nothing but the most unalloyed anxiety for your health. The answer you have now returned to all my inquiries renders it but justice to myself that I should say this, and add one thing more. Now that I can look into my own heart clearly, calmly, even coldly, I find in it nothing that does not confirm my conviction that I have not acted wrongly to you, though I have incurred your resentment.

And this is my consolation for all things which have befallen, or may yet befall, me: all self-sacrifices, all harsh judgments, all unkindness and desertion from those who should have known me better, all struggles with the world; struggles that seem to be contemplated with pleasure rather than sympathy.

Hereafter, when it may be too late, you will perhaps recognise the truth of what I say, and your heart will misgive you when you look at this letter, or any other in a correspondence which now seems to you so irksome. E. L. B.

It is but just to the memory of my grandmother (a memory gratefully revered by her grandson) that I should mention in connection with this correspondence, what I believe to have been the main cause of her resentment at my father's marriage. She had a strong sentiment of justice, and an intense, perhaps an old-fashioned, appreciation of the self-subordinating service due to that private sovereignty, the Family, from every one of its members and subjects. This feeling was, to herself, an established principle of conduct: and, guided by it, she considered, rightly or wrongly, that her daughter-in-law, when made aware of her objection to the marriage, and my father's pecuniary position in regard to it, ought to have released him from his engagement. She did not, perhaps, sufficiently realise the practical futility of a release which would not have been recognised or accepted by him. But it will be seen hereafter that her subsequent conduct to both the sufferers from a union which (for this and other reasons) had been to her a source of extreme vexation, was not only considerate but generous and (as usual with her) self-sacrificing.

CHAPTER VII.

DRUDGERY. 1828. ÆT. 25.

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FROM the mortified feelings expressed in his letters to his mother, from the pain with which they must have haunted the happiest hours and embittered the most anxious moments of a married life, not otherwise unhappy—from the vexing remembrance of relinquished ambitions, and the menacing prospect of most uncertain fortunes—my father had, at least, a daily distraction in the inexorable necessities of his new position. And in some respects, perhaps, it was fortunate for him that the maintenance of the home he had now made for himself entirely depended on the result of his literary labour. Throughout a life more ravaged than that of most men by domestic griefs and violent emotions, he retained a singular power of concentrating all his faculties on the intellectual task of the moment, whatever that might be; and it did not fail him at the outset. He was now to write, not for fame, or for pleasure, but for bread. And, in the acceptance of this obligation, all his mental gifts, and all his force of character, were subjected to the severest regimen by his practical judgment. He well knew that, if his pen was to support him, it must be both popular and prolific. He resolutely resisted the allurement of those departments of literature which most attracted him. In its lowest and obscurest regions he toiled unremittingly. The single object for which he wrote now was to pay his way through the world from year's end to year's end, owing no man anything. And what unknown, unrecorded

drudgery to compass this one poor desperate end! No part of my present undertaking has been to me more piteous than the disinterment of nameless remains from the sepulchres of those extinct ephemerals, Keepsakes, Books of Beauty, fashionable serials, popular almanacks, daily newspapers, weekly, monthly, and quarterly reviews. Multitudes of little stories, notices of trashy books, political articles, imaginary letters and dialogues, hasty sketches of men and manners, the whole of them mostly anonymous, were all poured forth unceasingly into the innumerable rivulets with which a periodical press is for ever feeding the waters of oblivion.

Here is one out of his many lists of subjects for the articles which he contributed to the periodical literature of that time.

1. On Oliver Cromwell.
2. Historical sketches.
3. The Dreamer, in four meditations.
4. Prose eclogues: classical: Pan and the Dryades, &c.
5. Bothwell and Mary Queen of Scots.
6. The young days of Shakespeare.
7. Comic adventures in Paris.
8. Algernon Sidney in prison.
9. Sketches of Fashionable Life.
10. The present state of Foreign Literature.
11. On Taste.
12. Epistles: 1. Philosophical; 2. Sentimental; 3. Satirical.
13. Life in Death, a Tale.
14. On the rise of the Greek Drama.
15. On the Athenian Democracy.
16. On the present House of Commons.
17. On Campbell's poems.
18. Miss Landon's Delia.
19. On the novels of the year.
20. On Miss Porter's novels.
21. Mrs. Hemans.[1]

[1] In connection with the name of Mrs. Hemans I may mention that my mother's first gift to my father was a volume of that lady's poems, on which he wrote the following inscription: 'Donum primum atque ergo haud ingratissimum amoris.'

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I fancy that to the mother who, convinced of her son's genius, was justly jealous of any but the noblest employment of it, the degradation of a mind formed for worthier work must at this time have been more apparent than the grim necessity which compelled such wretched taskwork; and that she had addressed some remonstrance to my father which provoked this galled reply.

Edward Bulwer to his Mother.

Woodcot: June 17, 1827.

My dearest Mother,—Your letter has disappointed me. I did not deserve it. But no matter. With respect to my writings, such as they are, while I am flattered that you should take any interest in them, I cannot but feel that, in the first place, there is something of mockery in condemning *a class* of writing which circumstances, as you well know, have compelled me to choose. At present, I must write for the many, or not at all. I cannot afford to write for the few. I do not write for writing's sake. In the next place, I feel that your censure is not just as regards the moral of the *particular* writings to which it refers. That of 'Falkland' you approved (except a single isolated passage which had nothing to do with the tendency of the whole) when you first read it. In your present condemnation, therefore, you have adopted the opinion of others whom I do not allow to be good judges, or else you are extending to my works your condemnation of myself. It is not for me to enter further into the vindication of 'Falkland.' I shall do that at length in the preface of the next book I publish. And to the moral of *that* book I know at least that no exception can be taken.

For the present, I will only add that nothing is so little understood, and so much disputed, as the moral of *any* book whatsoever; and that, while some abuse the moral of 'Falkland,' others, who themselves are exemplary in morals, and eminent in understanding, have given me their high approbation of it. Nor can I perceive on what principle that moral can be called a bad one, in the illustration of which vice, invariably recognised as vice, and never once defended or extenuated even by the lover himself, is immediately and sweepingly punished. I have now only to conclude. I do so by praying from my heart that you may enjoy every blessing of health and happiness. For my part, whatever your opinion of me

now, or your feelings towards me, I shall never forget your former kindness, never cease to lament your present construction of my conduct, nor ever entertain for you any other feeling than that of the sincerest affection.

E. L. B.

But all this while my father had, lying finished in his portfolio, a work that was destined to lift not only his name, but his genius and its aims, at one leap, out of that morass of literary trivialities in which the circumstances of his life seemed leagued to sink them. It was a work begun under happier auspices, finished with great care, and thoughtfully directed in all its parts to a literary purpose which, though not immediately apparent to some of its earliest critics, was completely and permanently fulfilled by its impression on the public mind. This work was 'Pelham.'

CHAPTER VIII.

'PELHAM.' 1828. ÆT. 25.

BOOK VII. 1826-31

ONCE upon a time, when everybody was talking about 'Pelham,' the author of that work was stopped before the door of the Senate House at Cambridge by a college friend, George Burges, who exclaimed, 'I had no idea, Bulwer, that you had it in you to write such a book!'

'Well,' replied the author, 'no man knows what he can do till he tries.'

The reply was characteristic of my father.[1]

[1] For this anecdote I am indebted to my friend, Mr. Elwin, who had it from George Burges himself. The original narrator of it, upon whose recollection my father's answer appears to have made a lasting impression, was a man of singular cleverness and oddity. He was born in Bengal, where his father was a watchmaker. Whilst still an undergraduate at Trinity he published (in 1807) an edition of the *Troades* of Euripides, with a preface and critical notes in Latin, which astonished by its excellence the best Greek scholars of his time, and raised the highest expectations of his future achievements as a Hellenist. Elmsley, in his preface to the *Bacchæ*, refers to him as 'vir ingenio, doctrinæ, et græcarum literarum amore, vix cuiquam secundus, qui in Troadum editione, quam pæne puer instituit, talem de se spem excitavit, qualem, meâ sententiâ, nemo ante eum huic studiorum generi addictus adolescentulus.' After leaving the University he was known chiefly by the eccentricities of his conduct and the absurdities of his speculations. He used to drive about London in a two-horsed vehicle of peculiar shape; the panels of which were painted with hieroglyphics emblematical of his views as to the origin of language. He started two coaches, which plied up and down the New Road; and he inscribed upon his visiting cards 'Mr. George Burges, *αρματοποιος*' (coachbuilder). He invested a large sum of money in the construction of a huge whale-shaped machine for the aerial conveyance of passengers from Dover to Calais. He invented a coat, fastened only by a single button in the centre of the back, and wore it in the streets of London, where it attracted general notice, but none of those who chanced to see him in his model dress were induced to adopt it. He then set up as the maker of a new kind of stays, which he called '*corsets à la Vénus*;' and he

Pelham
or
Adventures of a Gentleman.

Chap: 1.st

I am an only child — My father was the younger son of one of our oldest Earls, My Mother the dowerless daughter of a Scotch peer: M.r ~~Abbot~~ Pelham was a moderate Whig & gave sumptuous dinners; — Lady Frances was a woman of taste & particularly fond of diamonds & old china — [Vulgar people know nothing of the necessaries required in good society, & ~~their~~ the Credit they give is as short as their pedigree — Six years after my birth ~~our House was~~ there was an Execution

CHAP. VIII.

ÆT. 25

In his various prefaces he has himself related most of the circumstances connected with the composition, publication, and reception of this novel. A biographical sketch was prefixed to a collected edition of his works that appeared in his lifetime. The opinions expressed in it are those of its writer,

frightened and offended some of the leading ladies of fashion by the earnestness with which he requested their permission to try this invention upon them. About this time he married, perhaps in order that the *corset à la Vénus* might at least have one fair trial under his personal superintendence. Matrimony, or the ill success of his other occupations, disposed him again to authorship; and he wrote an unreadable play called *The Sin of Erin, or the Cause of the Greeks*, which he published with a dedication from 'George Burges to George Byron,' greatly to the resentment of the poet. His next experiment was a series of public lectures upon ancient and modern literature. In the course of these lectures he asserted that the pyramids have a foundation exactly corresponding in shape as well as size with the aboveground portion of them (a foundation consisting, in short, of an inverted underground pyramid), and he sang to the tune of 'Malbrook' the 'Θελω λεγειν Ατρειδας' of the pseudo-Anacreon. His Greek, indeed, overflowed on every occasion. His knowledge of it was extraordinary, and he especially loved to exercise his fertile ingenuity in amending the text of the Greek dramatists—emendations marked by the same kind of wild invention which distinguished his innovations in dress and carriages. His lectures on literature shared the fate of all his projects. They were neither popular nor remunerative, notwithstanding the apparent attractiveness of the following advertisement:—

'GOOD AND CHEAP FOOD
WITHOUT RUIN TO THE FARMERS!

'The nobility and gentry in and out of Parliament, and now nearly ruined by the awful depression of the landed interest, are respectfully informed that Mr. George Burges, M.A., of Trinity Coll., Cambridge, will, in his seventh lecture, detail an easy plan by which His Majesty's Ministers may, if they will, increase the revenue a million sterling annually, and so improve the soil of England as to enable it to feed sixty millions of mouths on cheaper and better bread than can be grown upon, or imported from, any other part of the globe.'

In the meanwhile his fortune had vanished into the coaches, the flying machine, the *corsets à la Vénus*, and other creations of his genius, and for some years he earned a scanty subsistence by teaching, and by drudging work for the booksellers. In this long period of toil and penury, with a wife and family to maintain, his buoyant hilarity and self-complacency triumphed over his fits of depression at every momentary gleam which broke in upon his burdened existence. In 1856 a legacy from his friend Mr. John Kenyon (author of *A Rhymed Plea for Tolerance*), and the assistance of Bishop Blomfield, saved him from absolute destitution; and he then settled, with his wife, at Ramsgate, where they kept a lodging-house, and where he died, not long afterwards, from the effects of a paralytic stroke.

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but its statement of facts was doubtless made with my father's sanction; and from this we learn that Mr. Colburn saw in 'Falkland' such a promise of better things that he offered the author 500*l.* for a novel in three volumes. 'I will give you one that shall be sure to succeed,' was the answer. The first volume of 'Pelham' was already written. It had been begun late in 1826, was finished early in 1828, and sent at once to Mr. Colburn. 'Mr. Colburn,' says my father,[1] 'placed it in the hands of his chief reader, Mr. Schubert, by whom it was emphatically condemned as utterly worthless. He then submitted it to his second reader, Mr. Ollier, the author of "Inesilla," whose more favourable report induced him to read it himself.' I learn from Mr. Lumley, the present proprietor of the 'Court Journal,' that 'three or four days afterwards Colburn called Schubert and Ollier into his room, and remarked "I have read Mr. Bulwer's novel, and it is my decided opinion that it will be the book of the year."' From this statement it may be inferred that the offer of 500*l.* for the copyright was conditional on Mr. Colburn's approval of the work. Having delivered his judgment on it, he immediately despatched a messenger with the cheque.

'The clerk sent with it,' continues Mr. Lumley in his communication to me, 'was Mr. Campbell, who says that Mr. Bulwer told him that, if this novel had been declined, he would never have written another, but have devoted himself entirely to politics. I myself heard Mr. Campbell narrate his reception, and the remarks made to him by Mr. Bulwer.'

The road to success is usually through failure. In proportion as the first step costs the second counts. No one ever recognised this more fully than my father, or acted more

[1] I have been assured that, when 'Pelham' was running through its sixth edition, a second 500*l.* was spontaneously sent by Mr. Colburn in recognition of the author's moral claim to a larger share in the profits, which greatly exceeded the expectations of either of them. But I cannot vouch for the truth of this statement; having been unable to find any corroboration of it in my father's correspondence.

resolutely on the principle involved in the recognition of it. That he would have long been daunted by the rejection of his manuscript, or permanently deterred from following his natural vocation by an obstacle at the outset so common to the literary career, is most unlikely. But, as in this fiction he had put forth all the powers of pleasing he was then able to command, he no doubt felt at the moment that, if it failed to please, no second effort of the kind would be received with greater favour.

'Pelham' was published, without the name of the author, on the 10th of June, 1828. The first reception of it seemed to justify the prognostications of Mr. Schubert. 'For two months after its publication,' says my father, 'it appeared in a fair way of perishing prematurely in its cradle. With the exception of two most flattering and indulgent notices in the "Literary Gazette" and the "Examiner," and a very encouraging and kindly criticism in the "Atlas," it was received by the critics with indifference or abuse. They mistook its purpose and translated its satire literally. But about the third month it rose rapidly into the favour it has since continued to maintain.' Looking back upon the enormous popularity it acquired, and contrasting this with the neglect of it by some journals, and its supercilious treatment by others, he drew the inference that it is an error in the producers of books to suppose that the reviewers represent, or greatly influence and guide, the public. 'I knew not,' he says in a preface to 'Pelham' dated 1840, 'a single critic, and scarcely a single author, when I began to write. I have never received to this day a single word of encouragement from any of those writers who were considered at one time the dispensers of reputation. Long after my name was not quite unknown in every other country where English literature is received, the great quarterly journals of my own disdained to recognise my existence.' He held up his own example to those 'aspirants,' from whom he received frequent letters 'lamenting their want of interest and non-acquaintance with critics,' and exhorted them to believe

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that they did not need professional critics for their patrons; 'that the public is the only critic that has no interest and no motive in underrating an author, and that his world is a mighty circle of which envy and enmity can penetrate but a petty segment.' Certainly no work of more than ordinary merit was ever dependent for its ultimate fate upon the verdict of critics. But with the mob of books that come crowding into the world, reviewers rarely have the leisure (even had they in the highest degree the requisite capacity) to test with care the relative qualities of all the volumes soliciting their attention, and to pick out from the throng the worthiest of its innumerable members. To invite much attention from them a book must bring with it, as it were, its letters of introduction; and it was just because my father did *not* 'know a single critic,' that the critics knew little of 'Pelham,' and that for some months the book appeared likely to perish in its infancy. This was no more the fault of its critics than of the book itself.

The sensation shortly afterwards created, however, by the appearance of 'Pelham' as a novelty in English literature, was not confined to the author's own country. It was continental: and throughout Europe the impressions made by it appear to have been unanimous and almost instantaneous. 'On the merits of this remarkable work,' said a writer in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes,' 'the whole opinion of Paris is, for once, in accord with that of London.' And another of its French critics mentions that within less than a year from the date of its publication in England, it had become a text-book about English society, in all the salons, the cafés, and the clubs of Paris. The work was rapidly translated also into German, Spanish, and Italian; and wherever it was translated it was read with avidity.

Its author has related the manner in which his conception of the work grew up. '"Mortimer, or the Memoirs of a Gentleman"—a sketch which formed the groundwork of

"Pelham," and was subsequently published with it in 1835—had been sent anonymously, during the author's undergraduate days, to a fashionable publisher with some other sketches written at the same time. The publisher thought these manuscripts unsuited to publication in a volume by themselves, and returned them with a recommendation to send them, for serial publication, to a magazine. To this the author was disinclined. Soon afterwards he went abroad, taking the manuscripts with him. During his sojourn at Versailles some of these manuscripts were rewritten in the form of imaginary letters, illustrating the growth of a particular sentiment in a particular character. The letters eventually grew into a slight narrative which, under the title of "Falkland," was sent to Mr. Colburn, and published by him shortly after the author's return to England in 1827. "Mortimer" during the same period had been entirely recast, and considerably developed in a direction wholly different from that of its first conception. The author has explained that the original tale was intended to illustrate the corruption of a character from the influence of worldliness; and "Pelham" the redemption of a character through the right use of that worldly experience which enables a man of sense to grow gradually wiser by the very foibles of his youth.'

He says, on another occasion, that the notion upon which he had proceeded in 'Mortimer,' 'of a clever man of the world corrupted by the world, was not new.' The view 'that the lessons of society do not necessarily corrupt,' which was the basis of 'Pelham,' had, he believed, never been worked out; and he thought that it would be 'a new as well as a useful moral to show that we may be both men of the world, and yet something wiser, nobler, and better,' than *mere* men of the world. This was the serious purpose of the work. The form most attractive for the development of such an idea had suggested itself to him before he hit upon a fitting subject for his novel. 'Encouraged,' he says, 'by the reception "Falkland" met

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with (flattering though not brilliant), I resolved to undertake a new and more important fiction. I had long been impressed by the truth of an observation of Madame de Staël, that a character at once gay and sentimental is always successful on the stage. I resolved to attempt a similar character for a novel; making the sentiment, however, infinitely less prominent than the gaiety.'

To give a greater air of vivacity to the picture, he settled that the hero should be the narrator of the story. The design of showing that a man of the world need not be permanently corrupted by it required that Pelham should not be a moralist, looking down with disdain upon the scenes that passed before him, but a person who took to himself the form and colour of the society in which he moved; a man addicted to the foibles the author intended to satirise, and yet possessing a reserve of good sense which rendered him intrinsically superior to them. 'I said to myself,' he wrote when disclaiming the self-portraiture imputed to him under a common impression that in Pelham he had consciously, and deliberately, and to his own satisfaction, depicted his own character,—'I said to myself, my hero is a terrible coxcomb. It suits me that he should be so. I have seen something of the various grades of society. The experience has not been acquired without pain: let it not pass without profit. The scenes I have witnessed I will describe: upon the manners I have noted I will comment: but not in my own person. In the first place, therefore, my hero shall have little in common with his author: in the second place, he shall be suited in outward temper to the sparkling varieties of life, though he shall have sufficient latent observation to draw from the follies he surveys, or even shares, the uses of reflection. His very faults shall afford amusement; and under them he may, without the formality of a preceptor, inculcate instruction.' The two sides to Pelham's nature were set forth still more distinctly in the novel itself; where Lady Roseville says to him, 'While you

seem frivolous to the superficial, I know you have a mind not only capable of the most solid and important affairs, but habituated by reflection to consider them. You appear effeminate, I know that none are more daring; indifferent, none are more actively ambitious; utterly selfish, and I know that no earthly interest could bribe you into meanness or injustice; no, nor even into a venial dereliction of principle.'

Not only did consistency demand that the contrasted qualities of Pelham should be kept up in the presentation of his own peculiar character, but it was also indispensable to the conception of the story that every part of it should be related in the way a man of Pelham's temperament would have told it. This was an obligation that taxed the skill of the author. 'I threw the narration,' he says, 'into the first person to import liveliness to the description of scenes too familiar or commonplace for high dramatic interest. But, in so doing, I had to contend with the difficulty of sustaining through three volumes a character of a peculiar order: and, as this character was represented as gay, light, worldly, glancing at the surface, and incurious of the depth, of things—it was necessary that I should give to every remark in the book (for even those which are not his own are remembered and repeated by the imaginary narrator of it) the special colours with which such a character was likely to imbue them. This difficulty became greatest in the history of Glanville, throughout which I had perpetually to repress all ostentatious tints, whether of language or feeling; because, although Glanville's story is much more sentimental than the rest of the book, it is the unsentimental Pelham who repeats it to the reader. And therefore the art of narrative required that the style of it should in this part be different and rather more poetical, yet not so different as to be altogether incongruous with the general tone of its somewhat flippant hero. I do not know whether in such a task complete success was attainable; but both the story and the whole character of Sir Reginald Glan-

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ville are, in my own opinion, very inferior to the worst parts of the rest of the book. Had I imagined, however, that "Pelham" could be considered a fashionable novel, I would have burnt every page of it. For I understand by the term "fashionable novel" a description of *things*, and I intended "Pelham" for a description of *persons*. It was not my aim to paint drawing-rooms, but to paint the people in them—their characters and humours.'

The execution of this plan assigns to Pelham the part of an actor in all the phases of society which the author himself had witnessed and observed. He frequents the salons and gambling-houses of Paris, and the fashionable coteries of London. He mingles in the counterfeit fashion of English watering-places; knows the tricks, and visits the haunts, of thieves; is privy to the manœuvres of political parties, and an adept in the arts of canvassing at elections. 'This work,' said the author in his advertisement to the edition of 1848, 'is the picture of manners in certain classes of society twenty years ago; and, in that respect, I believe it to be true and faithful.'

I have heard from those who remember the time that the claim is just; allowing only for the humorous exaggeration which preserves the spirit by departing from the letter, and imparts a flavour to incidents vapid in themselves. Even the Latin puns of Lord Vincent, which the readers of our generation might attribute to the author's fondness for a petty play upon words, reflect a then existing mania for interlarding conversation with classical quotations, grotesque or serious. As those who could make them were comparatively few, and those who could understand them were not very many, this pedantic kind of boredom was, happily, short-lived.

The satire in 'Pelham' grew naturally out of the circumstances of my father's life. These had afforded him a prematurely wide experience of society under most of its superficial aspects: and to the shallowness of the sentiments, and the ntrinsic frivolity of the objects, with which, under every one

of those aspects, so large a portion of society is seriously occupied, he had been made keenly alive by the enduring influence of that early affection which bequeathed to his character a certain depth of latent melancholy—an abiding sense of inward isolation from the world around him. Though constitutionally shy, he was not constitutionally morose. But before he could taste the pleasures of the world, his mind had been weaned from its vanities: and, had he not been convinced that the scenes in 'Pelham' could only be redeemed from insipidity by a constant gaiety in the description of them, his mode of depicting them would have been, I think, more gravely caustic. There is not a particle of levity in any one of the many private expressions of his personal views and feelings about human life, its duties, and its destinies. As it was, however, the zest, the spirit, the airy enjoyment with which Pelham plays his part in the lighter business of the story, became the cause why so many of its readers were blind to the ridicule involved in the pleasantry, and mistook the disposition of the hero for the approbation of the author. But, whether the satire were overlooked or understood, the author did not err in judging that society would relish a pungent representation of itself; and it was this assurance which led him to say to Mr. Colburn, 'I will give you a novel that *shall* succeed.' Having already completed his first volume, he had satisfied himself of his power to execute the scheme in a shape which fitted it for the amusement of the world.

He had, indeed, spared no efforts to secure this result. 'After I had formed in my own mind,' he says, 'the character of Pelham, I long and seriously revolved its qualities before I attempted to describe them on paper. For the formation of my story also, I had studied with no slight attention the great works of my predecessors, and had sought to derive from that study certain rules and canons to serve me as a guide.[1] If

[1] By no novelist of his own age were greater pains bestowed upon the construction of the story. He had elaborately studied the principles of this art, and the mastery of them was a merit he highly appreciated in the works of

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some of my younger contemporaries would only condescend to take the same preliminary pains, I am sure the result would be much more brilliant. It often happens to me to be consulted by persons about to attempt fiction; and I invariably find that they imagine they have only to sit down and write. They forget that *art* does not come by inspiration, and that the novelist, dealing constantly with contrast and effect, must, in the widest and deepest sense of the word, study to become an *artist*. They paint pictures for posterity without having learnt to draw.' Every sentence was, in a manner, a piece of art by itself, to be fashioned with lingering care. 'In the mere art of composition,' he wrote in 1840, 'if I have now attained to even too rapid a facility, I must own that this facility has been purchased by a most laborious slowness in the commencement.'

Many traits in the personages who figure in 'Pelham' must have been taken from originals known to the author. He says in his Autobiography, that whilst delineating Pelham himself he had his friend Villiers in his mind. The original of Pelham's valet, Bedos, was the author's own valet before he married. This man was a Frenchman. He had an odd little talent for constructing figures, and striking likenesses, in pen and ink, out of fantastic combinations of curved lines and flourishes. Portraits drawn by him, in this way, of Louis XIV., Voltaire, Rousseau, and other French worthies, still exist at Knebworth. They were parting gifts to his master; who had them framed and glazed in honour of an artist whose accomplishments were not confined to this peculiar manifestation of them. Although the character of the henpecked Clutterbuck is by no means in all aspects the counterpart of my great grandfather, this strongly drawn portrait of the clerical scholar, concentrating his whole being upon barren classical studies,

others. He considered that the novels of Mrs. Opie, though not otherwise of much literary value, were entitled, on account of the skilful management of their plots, to more praise than they have received.

was undoubtedly suggested by the wasted life of Richard Warburton Lytton. And the small expenses and vast expenditure of that pilfered ancestor have equally their parallel on a reduced scale in the robbery by servants of the simple-minded rector whose world was in his books. Rogers, with his habit of saying ill-natured things, was glanced at in Wormwood. Russelton was Beau Brummel; and Jemmy Gordon was the real name of an eccentric character at Cambridge, notorious for his scraps of learning, his inebriety, and his coarseness. My father gave me to understand that Vincent and Guloseton had also their originals in real life; but he did not mention their names. The murder of Tyrell in the novel was founded on the murder of Weare in 1824, by Thurtell, a low gambler like Thornton; and perhaps no part of the novel shows more skilful handling than the manner in which the real incidents are varied and applied in the description of this fictitious crime. Even Mr. Job Jonson, the thief to whose assistance Pelham is indebted for the proofs of Glanville's innocence, had his prototype in a member of the swell-mob known to the author. And, although not a single character in 'Pelham' is the exact portrait of any actual person, Sir Reginald Glanville's is in all probability the only one for which no features were borrowed from a living model.

Out of the panorama of life presented to us in 'Pelham,' two characters stand prominently forth. One of them is the hero himself, and the other is Sir Reginald Glanville. The latter, says the author, 'was drawn purposely of the would-be Byron school, as a foil to Pelham. For one who would think of imitating the first' (Glanville), 'ten thousand would be unawares attracted to the last.' He did not in the retrospect, as we have seen, approve either the story or the character of Glanville. The mind turns away with pain from the story: and the sullen moodiness, the prolonged ferocity of revenge, which intermingle with the higher traits of the character, keep us in an unpleasant suspense between sympathy and

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dislike; not allowing us to rest in either. The character of Pelham, on the contrary, may claim to be regarded as a masterpiece of its kind; although, perhaps, a due proportion has not been kept between his strength and his weakness. The purpose of the book would have been less liable to misconception, had the transition been more gradual from the scenes which exhibit only the amusing coxcombry, to those which reveal the sterling qualities, of its hero.

Byronism was the reigning form of foppery when 'Pelham' made its *début*. It is a wonder that the Byronic sham should have been so long sustained by impostors whom nobody believed, and who could not possibly have believed in themselves. But when the physiognomy of society has contracted any particular grimace which it thinks becoming, it is not to be preached or lectured out of countenance. *Similia similibus curantur*; and although both Pelhamism and Byronism were affectations, the first was a wholesome antidote to the last.

Youths in the fresh exuberance of life supposed it beautiful and heroic to put on a woe-begone expression of countenance, and pretend that their existence was blighted in its bud. They affected to be sated and worn out by premature vice, and darkly hinted that their conscience was tortured by the stings of unutterable crimes. But even were there an atom of truth in all this posturing, the romance of it would have been, not in the facts alleged, but in the mystery which gave to the allegation every attribute of imposture. Whether the dark deeds supposed to overshadow the lives of these blighted beings were theft, forgery, murder, incest, or what not, the instant such deeds were detected, or plainly confessed, the hero would have sunk into the crowd of vulgar criminals, and become an object, not of interest and sympathy, but contempt and detestation. Under every aspect, therefore, the assumed part was a cheat.

The foppery of Pelham was the reverse of all this. It was frank, cheerful, and refined. As soon as the novel became

popular the Byronic mask was dropped; and numbers who had been too honest to wear it hastened to indulge in a fashion which, with all its affectations and self-assurance, aimed at least at being pleasant, sociable, and human. The author of 'Pelham' congratulated himself on this result of his work. Writing of it in 1840, he remarks: 'Whether it answered all the objects it attempted I cannot say, but one at least I imagine that it did answer. I think that, above most works, it contributed to put an end to the Satanic Mania—to turn the thoughts and ambitions of young gentlemen without neck-cloths, and young clerks who were sallow, from playing the Corsair, and boasting that they were villains. If, mistaking the irony of Pelham, they went to the extreme of emulating the foibles which that hero attributes to himself, those, at least, were foibles more harmless, and even more manly and noble, than the conceit of a general detestation of mankind, or the vanity of storming our pity by lamentations over imaginary sorrows, and sombre hints at the fatal burden of inexpiable crimes.'

The assumption of the Pelham type of foppery was encouraged by the admiration with which many women regarded it; and amongst the curiosities at Knebworth is an enormous gold dressing-case, elaborately fitted with every conceivable requirement for the toilet of an exquisite, which was the anonymous gift of some fair enthusiast to the young author of 'Pelham.'

One, at least, of the changes which the book effected in matters of dress has kept its ground to this day. Lady Frances Pelham says in a letter to her son: '*A propos* of the complexion: I did not like that blue coat you wore when I last saw you. You look best in black: which is a great compliment, for people must be very distinguished in appearance to do so.' Till then the coats worn for evening dress were of different colours—brown, green, or blue, according to the fancy of the wearer; and Lord Orford tells me that the adop-

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tion of the now invariable black dates from the publication of 'Pelham.' All the contemporaries of Pelham would appear to have been simultaneously possessed with the idea that they were entitled to take to themselves the 'great compliment' paid by Lady Frances to her son.

Those who admired, and those who derided, the fopperies of this fictitious personage agreed, at least, in believing that the author intended him for a model, and was himself the superlative dandy he described. In a dialogue between him and his hero, which was prefixed to 'The Disowned' in 1829, he says: 'Have they not all, Mr. Pelham, with one voice, critics and readers, praisers and impugners, fastened your impertinences and follies upon me?' He emphatically repudiates the charge, and states that he determined, when he began his novel, that 'never once, from the first sentence to the last, should the author appear' in it. 'Mr. Pelham,' he continues, 'did I not inflexibly adhere to this resolution? Did I ever once intrude, even in the vestibule of a preface, or the modest and obscure corner of a marginal note? That I might not for an instant be implicated in *your* existence, did I not absolutely forego my *own*? I have never wished to favour the world with *my* character, its eccentricities or its secrets; nor should I ever be disposed in the person of any hero of romance to embody or delineate myself.'

And indeed, widespread though it was, the notion that 'Mr. Pelham' was my father's ideal of man, was not the less preposterous. No one with the capacity to write this novel could possibly have formed the design of composing a work for the glorification of puppyism. But the author, on his side, was also deluded when he fancied that there was nothing of himself in his hero. Dandyism could be but a trivial item in the life of a man whose brain and pen were ceaselessly at work; and, when taken to task for the attention he paid to his personal appearance, he aptly replied: 'Like the camel-driver, I give up my clothes to the camel: let him trample *them* in the

belief that he is crushing *me*.' This infinitesimal element, however, though not the '*me*,' was part of the '*me*;' and there are abundant indications in my father's private letters and journals that, when he wrote 'Pelham,' he was not without a certain tincture of the qualities he has imparted to his hero.

The foibles a man understands best are his own: he is acquainted with their inner springs as well as with their external effects; and, no matter how firmly a novelist might resolve to repress his personal peculiarities in the composition of his fictions, they would appear there in spite of him. Many a marked idiosyncrasy would never have been represented in books unless it had been native to the author in whose works we find it. Goethe could not have written 'Werther' had he been incapable of Wertherism, and the most complete embodiment of Byronism was Byron himself. The author of 'Pelham' was not exempt from this law. There were times when he might have been said to live the characters he created; his vivid conception of them ruling within him, and regulating his outward demeanour. I have seen him, in his later years, for months together, now in one new character (or, to speak more correctly, in one new phase of his own many-sided nature) and now in another; and this temporary possession of his whole individuality by special traits was only explained to me when I afterwards read the fiction he was writing at the time.

When 'Pelham' first appeared the two great literary magnates of the age were Scott and Byron. Leaving aside what was faulty in the conception of Glanville, 'Pelham' owes nothing to either of them. Next to the author of 'Waverley,' but *longo intervallo*, the novelists most in vogue were Dr. Moore, Miss Burney, Miss Edgeworth, Miss Austen, and Godwin. 'Pelham' bears no resemblance to any of their works. Its originality is conspicuous. The manners it portrays have changed: the society it describes has been fundamentally modified: the kind of sentiment against which it was a pro-

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test is extinct: the audience it addressed has nearly passed away. Time has taken from the book every source of adventitious or temporary interest, yet it is still among the fictions in regular demand by young and old. The knowledge of the world which underlies its obsolete forms, and the wit which sparkles through its pages, are probably the cause of its continued vitality. The literature of wit is longer lived than that of sentiment. A world which has ceased to weep over the sorrows of 'Werther' is still amused by the adventures of 'Gil Blas;' and the popularity of 'Pelham' may perhaps outlast the attraction of works in which its author has sounded profounder depths of feeling, or risen to loftier heights of imagination.

The following letter was written shortly after the publication of the book:—

Edward Bulwer to Mrs. Cunningham.

My dear Friend,—You won't write to me? Well then, don't! You can't find a better correspondent, so your silence will punish itself. I want to send you my books, but don't know how. Think of some conveyance if you can. 'Pelham, or the Adventures of a Gentleman' (my last) is now taking wonderfully. You will see by it that I have not spared my Paris acquaintances, nor forgotten my *one* Paris friend—*you*. I dare say you can hire it at Galignani's. I am sure, at all events, that it will not be long before it is there. People here are in a terrible ferment about the Administration. I would I were in the House. But I know nothing to tell you—nothing at least, till you write me a long letter, fairly filled, letting me know exactly how my beautiful acquaintance, your daughter, now is. Adieu. Ever as ever.

E. L. B.

First page of the Preface to the First Edition of The Disowned.

Preface

The time has past when an author could justly complain that his preface was not read – Now it is as constantly read as it is generally misinterpreted – The whole book (character of a new) is not unfrequently judged by the letter of Introduction which precedes it – & a preface has become as dangerous as it was formerly useless..

I should probably avoid (incurring) this danger in the work I now present to the Reader, if I were not induced To brave it the braver (it) in the defence of those I have already published. — ~~Both of our Works have little in common with this – they have still less in common with each other~~ — As a late writer I have been twice before the Public – "Falkland" my first attempt – appeared nearly two years since – & I should not now continue a contest over the dead if in literature as in life (Judgement) were not perpetuated solely by report – & Slander considered ~~victorious when the memory of the departed~~ triumphant – when undenied. — ~~did not deserve the object~~ Of its respect To any minor accusations against Falkland I shall be silent – – Perhaps I could be as bitter as my Opponents — but Satire is a better weapon for

CHAPTER IX.

BIRTH OF A DAUGHTER AND PUBLICATION OF 'THE DISOWNED.'

1828. ÆT. 25.

Edward Bulwer to his Mother.

Woodcot: June 22, 1828.

My dearest Mother,—Although I cannot hope that you will feel much interested in a late event of some importance to me, yet even if respect to you did not require me to announce it, I could not resist the opportunity which the birth of a daughter, five days ago, affords me to renew my inquiries after your health. Believe me, I am *most* anxious to hear how you are, and to be informed from yourself, (whenever it will not be irksome to you to give me a line) of your entire recovery. Pray pardon me when I say that nothing gives me more pain than to recall your last letter, and to think myself so unfortunate as still to labour under an opinion which I must venture to call unmerited. I do not say this, however, as a complaint. But if a feeling of disappointment which can only have its origin in affection gives to my words, either in this letter or in my last, any tone the least displeasing to you, I shall be most sincerely sorry, and must entreat you to place it to what, upon reflection, *can* only be ascribed to its real cause.

In informing you of a new tie, it is a great happiness to me to feel convinced that everything which tends to open or soften the heart makes it more deeply sensible of former claims upon it, and that every fresh affection only strengthens and confirms that which is the earliest and the most ineffaceable. With every sentiment you could desire, believe me, my dearest mother,

Your most affectionate son,

E. L. Bulwer.

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This child was christened Emily Elizabeth. She died in 1848. Her birth was the subject of some lines addressed to my father by Thomas Campbell.[1]

My mother, who had suffered much in her confinement, was unable to nurse the infant herself. The doctor strongly deprecated all attempts to bring it up by hand; and it was impossible to find in that rural district any respectable married woman willing to go out as a wet nurse. The child was therefore entrusted to a farmer's wife who had been recommended by a neighbouring family, and who lived a few miles from Woodcot House. This, in the circumstances of the case, was the only possible arrangement. But it was nevertheless unfortunate; for it deprived my mother of the interest she might otherwise have found in the tender cares of the nursery, while my father was absorbed in literary labours now rendered heavy and incessant by the extent to which the maintenance of his home depended on their profits.

[1] They were published in the twenty-third volume of the *New Monthly Magazine* of that year, from which I copy them here.

'My heart is with you, Bulwer, and pourtrays
The blessings of your first paternal days;
To clasp the pledge of purest, holiest faith,
To taste one's own and love-born infant's breath,
I know, nor would for worlds forget the bliss.
I've felt that to a father's heart that kiss,
As o'er its little lips you smile and cling,
Has fragrance which Arabia could not bring.

Such are the joys, ill-mock'd in ribald song,
In thought, ev'n fresh'ning life our lifetime long,
That give our souls on earth a heaven-born bloom;
Without them we are weeds upon the tomb.

Joy be to thee, and her whose lot with thine
Propitious stars saw Truth and Passion twine!
Joy be to her who in your rising name
Feels Love's bower brighten'd by the beams of Fame!
I lack'd a father's claim to her, but knew
Regard for her young years, so pure and true,
That, when she at the altar stood your bride,
A sire could scarce have felt more sire-like pride.

T. Campbell.'

Alas!—L.

CHAP. IX.

ÆT. 25

Miss Greene mentions in her memoirs that, during her visit to Woodcot in the summer of 1828, my father and mother were continually 'driving or riding over to see little Emily,' and that 'the baby, though born sickly, appeared to be thriving.' In the autumn of this year my mother was suffering from a painful weakness in her eyes. The doctors, when other remedies had failed, prescribed change of air. Woodcot was let to my eldest uncle, William Bulwer, for his wife's first confinement, and my father and mother went to Weymouth. From that place the latter wrote to Miss Greene: 'Edward wished to have Emily weaned that we might bring her with us; but I thought it unsafe, and she is well cared for where she is. That kind Mrs. Vanderstegen, who has the child brought to her every week, tells me she has a colour like a rosebud, fat white shoulders, and long dark eyelashes.' In a letter, written a few weeks later to the same correspondent, she adds: 'I have just heard from Edward, who went back to Oxfordshire a few days ago to see "little Boots," as he always calls her. "Never," he says, "did I see a child so improved, nor, for her age, so pretty. She has beautiful eyes, and her little plump limbs are as firm and smooth as marble."' To the lady mentioned in this letter (Mrs. Vanderstigen) she also wrote about the same time: 'I have heard of mothers being jealous of their daughters, and if I were at all of a jealous disposition, I really think I should be jealous of mine, from the rapturous way in which her father speaks of her.'

My father and mother did not return to Woodcot till the following year; and then only for a few months preparatory to leaving it for ever. On the eve of their departure my father wrote to his mother.

I have heard, with feelings I cannot possibly express, that you have still the remains of illness, and that you do not think or speak of me quite so unkindly as I had imagined. God knows that, if I had not thought you were utterly steeled against me, I would not have written to you as I have done, even to defend my-

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self. But when one thinks there is no affection left, and that all one's overtures are thought mercenary or selfish, writing is indeed a difficult and delicate task. My dear, dear mother, do not think, do not believe, that I could be such a wretch as not to feel the deepest and truest anxiety for your health; or that new ties and relationships of any kind could ever efface those that subsist between us. Do not believe, also, that I have reconciled myself to your displeasure, or that any selfish motive could have induced me to incur it. But this I won't talk of now. I write with my heart full, and I will make haste to finish what I have to say. William tells me you are gone to Knebworth, and have all kinds of annoyances there. I cannot bear the idea that you should be there only with servants and strangers. Do, for God's sake, let one of us—*me*, if I might ask it—come to you. We could, at least, save you some trouble, and be of some assistance to you. For my part I will not consider it in any way compromising you to a reconciliation with me, if you are not willing to it; nor ever speak to you on any subject but business. All I would wish is to be of use to you. God bless, and keep you my dearest, dearest mother.

E. L. B.

My grandmother did not accept the offer; nor, whatever inward struggles may have been produced by her son's appeal, does she appear to have exhibited as yet any signs of relenting. The publication of 'The Disowned' afforded him another opportunity for renewing his attempt to bring about a reconciliation; and, with a copy of the work, he sent her this letter, dated 'Weymouth, December 1, 1828.' [1]

My dearest Mother,—Some time ago, when you wrote to me about 'Falkland,' I mentioned that I had another work in the Press which would contain a moral tendency, likely to please all people. This circumstance makes me venture to send you the accompanying volumes, and it will give me great pleasure if you like them. I cannot avoid the opportunity of adding that it is now a year and three months since you have seen me, and that I feel the most increasing concern at your continued displeasure.

[1] Books published at the close of one year commonly bear the date of the next; and, deceived by its title-page, all the persons who have written sketches of my father's life, have stated that *The Disowned* did not appear till 1829.

May I hope at last that when I come to London, it will have abated sufficiently for me not to consider myself quite proscribed from your house, or quite an alien from your affections? Often and often, notwithstanding your refusal to see me, or even to hear from me, I have been tempted to intrude myself more on your remembrance than I have done. But I have been placed in peculiar circumstances; and you cannot consider those circumstances without feeling that I had to struggle against any misconstruction of motives, or any suspicion of being actuated in my conduct by other causes than affection for you. At length, let me hope that I need no longer do so. A year and three months have passed, and I have been enabled by my own exertions, not only to obtain for myself an independence, and a fair ground of calculation that in time this independence will become affluence, but also to have paid off debts previously incurred to the amount of several hundreds. I say this only with the view of freeing all concession to you (and I am willing to make every concession you can wish) from the shadow of any feelings but those which can alone be pleasing to yourself and honourable to me. I cannot but think that it will be to you not quite ungratifying to feel and know that it is from the most real affection, and from the bottom of my heart, that I beseech you to suffer me once more to see you, and to subscribe myself, my dearest mother, with every sentiment of love and respect,

Your most affectionate son,
EDWARD L. BULWER.

The book, the letter, and the course of events, had a softening influence on his mother, and prepared the way for an interview. But before I continue the personal narrative, I must dismiss the book. Like 'Pelham,' it was published anonymously. In the dedication to his eldest brother, William, their relationship was not mentioned, and the dedication was unsigned.

It has surprised me to find, on reference to contemporary notices of 'The Disowned,' that by the majority of its first critics it was rated higher than 'Pelham.' But, if the book itself was written in haste, the reviews of it, in all probability, were written still more hastily; and the comparison

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they draw between the first two novels in favour of the second, notwithstanding its marked inferiority, is perhaps attributable to surprise at its unlikeness to 'Pelham' in purpose, sentiment, and style.

'Pelham,' written (the greater part of it at least) in high animal spirits, gave embodiment to an idea which had grown and fructified for years in the brain of its author. 'The Disowned' was conceived and completed in less than a twelvemonth, at a time when my father's mind was oppressed by many causes for anxiety, and when the compulsory production of much ephemeral work must have inflicted a fatiguing strain upon his faculties. 'I will fairly own,' he says in his preface to it, 'that when I sat down to the composition of these pages, I had thought to make them far more deserving of the notice of the public than they are. But many circumstances have combined with inability to disappoint my hopes. I can no longer abstract attention from the realities of life; and the spirit of creation within me is not what it has been.'

Some of those 'realities of life' which distracted his mind, and marred his literary efforts, suggested leading traits in his conception of the two heroes of his double plot. In Clarence Lindon he has traced the varying fortunes of a well-born and high-spirited youth, suddenly thrown upon his own resources, with the resolution to win for himself a position not inferior to the one he inherited, and *voluntarily* surrendered. In Algernon Mordaunt he has described the sufferings of a noble and proud nature, struggling with a poverty embittered by his inability to shelter from it the wife for whose sake it was confronted. He further drew upon his own experience in the picture of gipsy life; and the main features in the career and character of Crawfurd were derived from the then notorious history of Fauntleroy, the banker, who was executed in 1824 for forgery.

This man's malversations were conducted on a mighty

scale. His appropriations of the property of his customers in the course of a single year were estimated at not less than 170,000*l*. Other parts of his conduct were discovered to have been faulty. His wife, who was of a respectable family, had borne him a child before marriage. He was said to have married her under compulsion, and he did not live with her after the day of their union. Previous to his arrest he had enjoyed a reputation for scrupulous integrity. After the detection of his guilt, public opinion (always in extremes) attributed to him a systematic and boundless depravity of which he was probably innocent. Persons who had enjoyed his sumptuous hospitality remembered with indignation that they had often seen him fall asleep after dinner; from which they now inferred the complete callousness of his conscience during the perpetration of his frauds. When reproachfully reminded of this habit after his condemnation, he made the striking confession that, from the beginning of his criminal career, his fear of what was to come had been so unceasing and intense that always the apprehension took possession of him in the stillness of night, and drove away sleep. Lights, wine, and the presence of animated guests were, he said, sedatives to his mental torment, and the brief after-dinner slumbers only the result of exhaustion. The Fauntleroy of the novel, Richard Crawfurd, was designed to bring into full relief the moral excellence of Mordaunt.

With the primary materials of 'The Disowned,' drawn fresh from life, one would have expected a work widely different from that which was produced by my father's treatment of them. But many of his earlier novels were avowedly the experiments of an eager student in his art; and the defects of 'The Disowned,' independent of haste and a mind distracted by domestic trials, were the consequences of the theory on which the book was constructed. To an edition of it published in 1835, he prefixed an essay 'On the different kinds of prose fiction;' and in that essay he divides the 'Narrative Novel' into three principal forms—'the Actual,

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the Satiric, and the Metaphysical.' Anxious, he says, not to repeat himself, he attempted to cultivate in turn each of these different kinds. In the 'Advertisement' prefixed to the edition of 1852, he tells us that 'at the time when the work was written he was engaged in the study of metaphysics and ethics.' Not unnaturally, therefore, he was tempted to turn these studies to account in a 'metaphysical novel'—of which he considered 'Wilhelm Meister' to be a successful example. His conception of the 'metaphysical novel' is given in the essay. 'It is not,' he says, 'to be regarded as a mere portraiture of outward society.' . . . 'It often wanders from the exact probability of effects in order to bring more strikingly before us the truth of causes.' . . . 'It often invests itself in a dim and shadowy allegory which it deserts or resumes at will, making its action but the incarnation of some peculiar and abstract qualities.' And he says expressly of 'The Disowned'—'the development of the Abstract was its principal object.'

The form which this 'development of the Abstract' assumed is set forth in the preface to the Second Edition (December 1828). The author there states that his design was 'not to detail a mere series of events in the history of one individual or another,' but 'to personify certain dispositions influential upon conduct.' For instance—'Vanity (Talbot); Ambition (Warner); Pride (Lord Borodaile); Selfishness and Sensuality (Crawfurd); Philanthropy (Mordaunt).' He says further, in the same essay, that 'King Cole' was the abstract development of 'the love of liberty' from the poet's point of view, and 'Wolffe' of the love of liberty under its political aspect. Every one of the characters was the personification of an abstraction: and, for this reason, they could hardly be living men.

My father was aware of the risk; and he fancied he had avoided 'the error common to most metaphysical writers of fiction—of sinking the human and physical traits in a too

elaborate portraiture of those which are immaterial and mental; and so creating, not creatures of flesh and blood, but mere thinking automata and reasoning machines.' He did not perceive that the side from which he approached the subject was inevitably fatal to his good intentions. He did not begin by recalling to his mind types of character. He started with his 'abstract qualities,' and then considered how he could people his novel with the concrete 'incarnations' of these abstractions. There was an error, which could not be cured, in the first concoction of the design. Metaphysics was the author's chief object, and human nature was sacrificed to it.

The author believed that the didactic matter in 'The Disowned' would be compensated in the eyes of ordinary novel readers by the accompaniment of exciting incidents and the full play of powerful passions. This was a second miscalculation. The more you raise interest by stirring scenes and a pathetic plot, the greater becomes the impatience at disquisition and digression. Instead of the romance operating as a relief to the philosophy, the philosophy is felt as an incumbrance on the romance. The situations intended for a counterpoise to the metaphysics even appear to have been exaggerated with the view of rendering them more effectual. And this tendency to melodrama was an additional evil incidental to a mistaken conception.

Of the personified abstractions in 'The Disowned' Mordaunt is the chief. My father says of him: 'His character is an allegory in itself; being the development of the love of knowledge, as producing necessarily the love of virtue—the incarnation of that great stoic principle of Christian Ethics, self-dependent and above fate.' No character in a novel can inspire much interest if it is 'above fate,' and the mere personification of an abstract principle in ethics. But the problem in human life which the story of Mordaunt opens out has in itself the most powerful elements of dramatic interest. It is

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as new to-day as it was in the days of Job; and to-day the conditions of it are infinitely more complex and uncertain.

I can conceive no subject worthier of treatment by a great novelist than this conflict between Character and Circumstance in the case of a man of gentle birth and noble mind who, by a sudden stroke of fortune, is plunged into irremediable destitution, with the loss of not only wealth and rank but all the other social attributes of his prosperity. If the *Deus ex machinâ* be excluded, which will prove the strongest, Character or Circumstance? My father started this problem in 'The Disowned' when his genius was still immature, and his art undeveloped by practice and experience. Later novelists have attempted to deal with it, and all have eluded the gist of the question. In his 'Roman d'un Jeune homme pauvre,' Octave Feuillet has made it the subject of a beautiful fiction. But his hero is restored in the end to all the advantages of his original state by a circumstance independent of his volition, and not directly brought about by the action of his character. In my father's treatment of the career of Mordaunt there is the same evasion. And this is one of the unfair liberties which Fiction takes with Metaphysics and Ethics when she assumes the special patronage of the reduced circumstances of these poor teachers. As it fared with the Man of Uz, and the Homeric Heroes, so it fares with all her favoured champions in their fierce but fictitious conflicts with the evil odds against them. Just when the battle is hottest, the good knight's sword broken, and his shield beaten down by the foe, his protecting Providence intervenes, and snatches him unhurt from the field.

To myself Mordaunt appears the least successful of all my father's creations. Long after he had recognised the numerous defects of the story, he retained for this character a singular predilection, which must be ascribed to his having transferred to it many of the qualities predominant in himself when he wrote 'The Disowned.' It is said of Mordaunt in the novel,

'he mixed little if at all with the graver occupants of the world's prominent places. Absorbed alternately in his studies and his labours of good, the halls of pleasure were seldom visited by his presence; and they who, in the crowd, knew nothing of him but his name, and the lofty bearing of his mien, recoiled from the coldness of his exterior; and, while they marvelled at his retirement and reserve, saw in both but the moroseness of the student and the gloom of the misanthropist.' And in a summary of the character given by my father in one of his prefaces, he says: 'I have attributed to him all the feelings usually supposed to belong to the misanthrope. pride, reserve, unsociability, a temper addicted to solitude as to a passion, and unable, from its romance, its refinement, and its melancholy, to amalgamate with others. These peculiarities, I beg particularly to state, I do not consider ornaments but blemishes.'

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He was conscious, nevertheless, that the peculiarities were his own. 'A misanthrope by feeling,' he says in one of his letters to Mrs. Cunningham, 'I am a philanthropist by principle,' and in his private sketch of his own character at the age of forty-three, he makes this confession: 'When abused and calumniated, I feel it as more than injustice, I feel it as ingratitude. You calumniate me, O men, and I would lay down my life to serve you.' The philanthropic side of his nature is marked by traits in the novel, if not more faithful, yet more distinctive, than that of the misanthropy. Compare the passage in which Mordaunt speaks of his zeal for mankind with the vow made by the author at the grave of the poor girl who had been all in all to him, and it is impossible to doubt from what original he drew. 'My earliest desire,' says Mordaunt, 'was ambition; but then came others—love, and knowledge, and afterwards, the desire to bless. The love of true glory is the most legitimate agent of extensive good. For me it survived all but the deadness, the lethargy, of regret. When no one was left upon this altered earth to

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animate its efforts, then the last spark quivered and died. I would say that for me ambition is no more: not so are its effects. The hope of serving that race whom I have loved as brothers, but who have never known me—who by the exterior pass sentence on the heart, in whose eyes I am only the cold, the wayward, the haughty, the morose,—this hope, the hope of serving *them*, is to me *now* a far stronger passion than ambition was before.' The comprehensive benevolence of Mordaunt, his 'love of knowledge producing the love of virtue,' and his self-dependence in his poverty, had all of them some counterpart in my father's temperament at that period of his life. And thus he valued the portrait for more than its intrinsic literary worth, because, in an exaggerated form, it was a record of his own feelings, trials, struggles, and triumphs.

The mistaken attempt to people a stirring novel with abstractions fully accounts for the unreality of the characters in 'The Disowned,' and that the author should have tried the experiment of blending incongruities is explained by his youth and inexperience. But when every fault has been enumerated, a discriminating critic will still find, even in the novels written during my father's first three years of enforced and immature authorship, abundant matter for surprise at the wealth of conception and ideas which could produce in such rapid succession 'Pelham,' 'The Disowned,' 'Devereux,' and 'Paul Clifford.'

CHAPTER X.

RECONCILIATION WITH HIS MOTHER, AND REMOVAL TO LONDON.

1828–9. ÆT. 25.

'I KNOW not,' said Mordaunt in 'The Disowned,'—speaking with a presentiment, which had no apparent cause, of his impending death,—'whether you judge rightly in thinking the sphere of political exertion the best suited for me: but I feel at my heart a foreboding that my planet is not fated to shine in *any* earthly sphere. Sorrow and misfortune have dimmed it in its birth, and now it is waning towards its decline.' My grandmother could not read 'The Disowned' without noting the many particulars in which her son had portrayed himself in the character of Mordaunt. Her maternal solicitude caught up the apprehension that this 'foreboding' was one of them. At the same time she was informed by my uncle William that my mother had, from ill-health, nearly lost the sight of one eye. The title of the novel had an ominous application to the position my grandmother had assumed towards her son: and, with these intimations of calamities, present and prospective, her alarm began apparently to get the better of her resentment. If any terrible crisis were to occur during, and perhaps in consequence of, her alienation from him, her self-reproaches would be dreadful. Her fears came to second my father's persistent and touching appeals to her. Her response to his first advances was indirect, through a letter to her eldest son, in which she expressed sympathy for the

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malady of my mother; who tells the event in a letter to her friend Miss Greene:—

8, Royal Crescent, Weymouth: December 17, 1828.

My dearest Mary,—I thank you for your curiosity about my eye. It is *in statu quo*, and I am going to try the churchyard specific of letting it rest in peace. William writes to me that he told his mother Edward had brought me here on account of my health, and that I had nearly lost the sight of one eye. I inclose the extract he sends me from her letter in reply. It is really very kind of her to take in me, whom she dislikes, so much more interest than any of my own relations have ever shown. I feel grateful to her for it, and wish she did not think of me so badly as she does.

I am surprised that 'The Disowned' has not yet reached Dublin, for it is now a fortnight since it was published. It is in high repute here, and the King sent for it twice before it came out. My uncle has heard from Lord Cunningham that he is delighted with it. Walter Scott wrote to his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart (the editor of the 'Quarterly'), a letter in which there was a whole page filled with enthusiastic praises of 'Pelham.' But he (Scott) adds, 'It is a pity the author has such a twist in his politics, and it is doubly a pity coming from so *very* able a pen.' Of course, nothing but rank Toryism will do for Walter Scott.[1] I should be very much obliged to you if you would tell me candidly which is the most generally popular at your side of the water, 'Pelham,' or 'The Disowned.' Not that it much matters; for, with all due deference be it spoken, Irish opinions somehow or other always appear to me either down at heel, or wrong side out.

A letter from my grandmother to my father soon followed: in which she offered him pecuniary assistance, to save him from the toil that was wearing out his strength. He declined her bounty unless he could first have her love, and again implored her consent to a meeting.

'Most truly happy should I feel,' he wrote on December 23, 1828, 'to be indebted to you for *any* mark of kindness, to be dependent upon you for *anything* calculated to assist me in

[1] The author of *Waverley* was an old, when the author of *Pelham* was a young, man. The unimpassioned wisdom of age is 'rank Toryism' to the impulsive cleverness of youth.

this world. But unless favours proceed from affection, what could be so unworthy as to receive them? My dearest mother, how, if I were grinding my very heart out in toil, how *could* I touch a sixpence of your money so long as you forbid me to see and to thank you? For the love you have formerly borne me, for the sake of your own intended generosity, for the sake of what, not as a son but as a human being, I have a right to request,—a hearing, I beseech you to see me. Do not think I wish to press this hastily upon you. Take your own time, name the place, fix the manner, the conditions, let it be when, where, and how you will, I only ask you to let me have this interview. It is the greatest favour you can do me, the one most worthy of yourself, the one for which I shall ever feel most truly and deeply grateful.'

His entreaties prevailed: and we learn from a letter he wrote to his mother on Christmas Day that she agreed to see him when she went to town. She was not yet prepared to receive him at Knebworth as a guest.

Edward Bulwer to his Mother.

Christmas Day, 1828.

My dearest Mother,—Although I have just directed a letter to you at Knebworth, yet, as you seem to think it desirable I should send a duplicate to Seymour Street, I do so.

I endeavoured to express to you in that letter how deeply, most deeply, your last had affected me; and how happy I felt at receiving any mark of your returning affection and interest. The passage you mention in 'The Disowned' did certainly express private feelings; but at the time I wrote it I was in worse health than I am now, nor have I *now* any reason to believe that I shall not live long beyond that presentiment of death which I have for some time deeply felt, and which is not the less unconquerable because it is not to be accounted for.

In the letter I addressed to you at Knebworth by this post, I did not think it irrelevant to mention something of the successes I had gained for the present, and the reasonable grounds I had to hope for successes in the future. I did not think this irrelevant, because

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it gave me the opportunity to assure you from the bottom of my heart that no success was half so desirable or so dear to me as the single hope of recovering a place in your affection. I shall most anxiously look forward to your return to town and your permission to let me see you there. And while, upon this day, I thank you again for your kind wishes for me (*wishes which you can best realise*) I beg most sincerely to return them. May you, my dearest mother, enjoy a long, a very long, continuance of health and happiness. My own happiness will be best attained by the fulfilment of my hope that in an intercourse of mutual affection I may be allowed in some slight measure to contribute to yours.

Ever your most affectionate son,
E. L. B.

P.S.—I send you a short notice of 'The Disowned,' merely because you wished to know why I thought you might like it. I am most touched by, and sincerely grateful for, your inquiries after my wife's eye. It is exactly the same. She cannot see the least with it. But we will try your recipe.

A brief passage from a letter of my mother's to Miss Greene records the important event that my father and grandmother had met.

'About a month ago,' she wrote from Weymouth on January 17, 1829, 'Edward got a letter from his mother, which I thought a relenting one. Upon which he went to town. She saw him, and he has been there ever since.'

No resentments are so inconsistent and inexorable as those of lacerated affection. Indignant at what it conceives to be an insult to its own omnipotence, the self-tormenting love rejects the reconciliation for which it pines; and, when the effects proceeding from the disregard of its authority are irreparable, the difficulty of forgiveness is vastly increased. My grandmother could never accept my father's just distinction that he had not set his love to Miss Wheeler against his love and duty to his mother, and given the preference to the former; but that gradually, and to a certain extent unawares, he had engaged his honour as well as his heart, and that from this

moment it was no longer a question of *self*-sacrifice, since he could not abandon his own dearest hopes without basely sacrificing a second person to whom he had implicitly pledged his faith before he plighted it in words. Let him say what he would, the divergence on this point remained; and the reconciliation, which took place in form at the interview, did not restore altogether the old cordiality between mother and son.

My father's manifold relations with the press rendering it needful for him to be nearer to the centre of its operations, he finally quitted Woodcot in September 1829. Fulham was a convenient resting-place during the search after a suitable house in London; and here, at a little place called Vine Cottage, he and my mother remained, with their infant daughter, till the close of the year.

They then removed to No. 36 Hertford Street, a house which in the meanwhile my father had purchased and furnished. The protracted negotiations about it were carried on with the notorious Nash, the then fashionable architect: and the remembrance of his vanished reputation may give some interest to my mother's description of him in a letter to Miss Greene:—

> Mr. Nash having been very obstinate, I went with Edward to see if, both of us together, we could manage him better. We found that worthy seated in his own splendid library, or rather gallery; which is half a mile long and done in mosaic to imitate the Vatican. He was more obstinate than ever, declaring with an oath that he would not abate a farthing, and then he changed the subject. At last he said, 'Pray, sir, are you any relation to that wonderful young man who has written the delightful novel of "Pelham"?'
>
> 'Allow me,' said I, 'Mr. Nash, to introduce you to that wonderful young man.'
>
> Upon which Nash jumped up, made Edward a low bow, and said, 'Well then, sir, for Pelham's sake, you must have the house on your own terms, and I'll make it one of the handsomest houses in town for you, with the best library. And, if you ever again write anything half as good as "Pelham," by God, I shall be glad to think I planned the room you wrote it in.'

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After this fine speech, he offered Edward casts from all his statues, showed us all over his house (or rather palace), and finished off by throwing open the doors of another suite of rooms, where, ensconced in her domestic bower, sat Mrs. Nash.

'My dear,' he exclaimed, 'I have brought the author of "Pelham," and his wife, *for you to look at*.'

Thereupon we put out paws, wagged our tongues (in default of tails), and walked up and down in the most docile manner, to be stared at, as the first Pelham and Pelhamess ever caught alive in this country.

At this juncture of affairs, old Nash began to fumble in his pockets (which he has a great trick of doing).

'Oh, never mind paying now,' said I, 'I'll take the bronze chimneypiece to my boudoir instead.'

'Very well,' he replied, laughing, 'so you shall, and anything else you like.'

And so I hope at least that Edward will take the house, which he likes very much, and that this matter is settled. No other news to-day. Miss Fanny Kemble is the eighth wonder of the world, but some people do say that she has the appearance of being schooled by her whole family.

My father's removal to London involved a new adjustment of his domestic relations with his mother. She had hitherto declined to receive his wife. This might be attended with little annoyance when mother and son were resident in different places: but when both had houses in town, with many friends and acquaintances in common, her refusal to speak or bow to the wife in whom she only saw the source of all her heart-burnings was a daily source of embarrassment. The difficulties attending upon the family ties, with the increasing evils of overwork, form the main chapter in my father's trying life at this period.

CHAPTER XI.

EFFECT OF THE LITERARY UPON THE MARRIED LIFE.

1829. ÆT. 26.

My grandmother predicted that, if my father married Miss Wheeler, he would be, 'at a year's end, the most miserable of men.' Her forebodings had not been verified: but, in a way unexpected by any of the persons concerned, her displeasure at the marriage was leading, by its effects, to the fulfilment of the prophecy in the future.

When my father married, relying mainly upon his pen for his income, he had no intention of reducing his style of living to that of an author with straitened means. In the career he had shaped out for himself he was looking forward to a seat in the House of Commons, and he was bent upon retaining a social position which, in times more exclusive than the present, would not be a bar to his parliamentary pretensions. Nor, in this, was he uninfluenced by a proud determination that, in spite of my grandmother's refusal to countenance his marriage, his wife should lose nothing of the status which belonged to his mother's son. Looking back to the little reputation he had acquired when his resolution was formed, it is impossible not to be astonished at the courage and confidence which embarked him in a scheme of life that was based upon the expectation of earning from one to two thousand a year by his writings. His success had been equal to his daring. He at once attained popularity in the department of literature which, appealing to an extensive public, is

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the most remunerative; and which an imaginative mind, having its stores within itself, can the most readily produce. But the tax on his mental and physical powers was extreme. Having to supplement his novels by a multitude of anonymous contributions to periodicals on subjects of the most trivial and transient interest, he consumed hours upon hours in repulsive drudgery. If these intrusive labours were fretting from his distaste for them, his fictions were exhausting from the hold they took on his imagination. With the necessity for quick production, the pauses (far too brief) in the manual labour were filled, not by placid ruminations, but by his acting over in feverish thought the dramatic situations of the coming chapter.

His temperament was by nature sensitive and irritable. His overtasked faculties and enforced confinement rendered it morbidly acute. 'He seemed,' says Miss Greene, who was then on a visit to my mother, 'like a man who has been flayed, and is sore all over.' Fighting always against time, every hindrance and interruption was a provocation to be resented. All the petty household worries were to his exasperated brain, exactly as Miss Greene describes, what frictions and jostlings are to highly inflamed flesh. His mother was alarmed for his health, which was in jeopardy: but a worse and more subtle evil was preparing.

My father has put on record his feelings towards his wife during these years of excessive toil. He had an ardent affection for her, and unbounded esteem. Whatever virtues are in woman he believed to be in her. But, in the crowded fevered life, she did not reap the fruits of his love. He was nearly always either writing, or meditating in preparation for it. She had, and could have, but little of his society; and, when they were together, his nervous irritability vented itself at every unwelcome circumstance in complaints, or taunts, or fits of anger. To harsh words and unjust reproaches his wife returned meek replies. Any distress his warmth occasioned

her, she carefully concealed from him. She was studious to please him, and endeavoured to anticipate every want and wish. Her gentleness and forbearance increased his gratitude and devotion to her; and, whenever he perceived that he had wounded her, he was full of remorse. But the flaw subsisted all the same—that the demands of their daily existence would not permit the homage of his heart to be translated into act.

The mischief was aggravated y the unfortunate occurrence that, my mother being unable to suckle her first-born child, it had been nursed out of the house. Her maternal instinct, thus thwarted in its origin, never revived. The care of children was ever afterwards distasteful to her. Losing this satisfaction to her affections, unless she had the company of my father or of visitors, she was alone in the home: and, if her other occupations filled up her time, they could not be a substitute to her for what she missed. Her disappointment at not having had more of my father's society, with feelings unruffled and mind disengaged, was not the only result to be deplored. She was deprived of the educating effects of an intercourse which might have trained her, in the particulars wherein she was deficient, to be his companion to the end. This, could it have been, would have effected even more for the redemption of her happiness than for the rescue of his. For from the pang of disappointed affection or wounded feeling men have, at least, an escape commonly denied to women, in their capacity to live amongst abstract ideas. But in nine cases out of ten the happiness of a woman's life (nay, even the whole tendency of her nature) depends almost entirely upon the character of its personal relations; and, if these are unsatisfactory, the injury as well as the suffering they involve are aggravated by the narrowness of her interests and the extreme personality of all her feelings.

As it was, neither of them saw the issue to which the divided life was tending. They entirely agreed in recognising

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the necessity for the slavery which kept them asunder. My father did not work more for himself than for his wife: and of the two she was the one that cared most for the surroundings which imposed on him the labours that were casting these dark shadows over the sunlight of their love.[1]

Here it was that my grandmother's displeasure at the marriage was working towards a later fulfilment of her prognostications. It debarred my father from the subsidy which would have left room in his life for the habitual exercise of his affections. It seemed that the evil would now be remedied. Directly my grandmother was reconciled to him she restored the dropped allowance. Had it been continued, it might have averted the sorrows yet in the distance. But the old umbrage was rather suppressed than extinct; and hardly had the allowance been renewed before words were spoken that drove my father to decline the favour and return the instalment he had received.

This fatality was the reverse consequence of an event which promised to promote the general harmony—his successful efforts to induce his mother to recognise her daughter-in-

[1] On his wife's enjoyment he seems to have thought no expenditure extravagant. Nor was she insensible of his constant wish to please her in this way. Her early letters to Miss Greene make frequent and affectionate mention of it. Thus in one written from Weymouth (January 17, 1829) she says to her friend: 'How do you suppose that audacious husband of mine has been passing his time in town? Why, he must needs send me down what he termed "a little Christmas box," and what was, in fact, a huge box from Howell & James's, full of the most beautiful dresses and shawls, besides sixty-four yards of the finest blonde, and a set of handkerchiefs that look as if they were spun out of lilies and air, and broidered by the fairies. You would think this enough for some time at any rate. But he thought differently; for on New Year's morning down there came by the mail a parcel, in which when I opened it I found a bracelet that must have cost him heaven knows what. And, poor dear, he never spends a penny on himself.' Five months later she wrote, from Tunbridge Wells, to the same correspondent: 'The last time we were at Storr's I found that he had ordered me a gold thimble which he had the absurdity to design himself with little precious stones, and the still greater absurdity to pay fifteen guineas for, when, at the same time, he tells me he is too poor to buy himself a pony which I know he wants.'

These letters give biographical meaning to that passage in my father's un-

law. The next two letters tell in detail this portion of the story:— CHAP. XI. ÆT. 26

Edward Bulwer to his Mother.

Hertford Street, Tuesday night.

My dearest Mother,—I cannot but think that, in some conversation that has taken place between us relative to my request that you should visit at my house, I must have expressed myself so ill that the real nature of the request has not struck you in its proper light.

I therefore think it worth while to restate the question dispassionately, addressing it to you on the two points I have already put before you. First, that of kindness to me as my mother (a kindness which the generous offer you have already made me proves I can still rely upon); and, secondly, that of principle, as a conscientious and right-minded person, which I sincerely think you are to a very uncommon degree. I feel assured by this conviction that you will not be offended if I appeal to the latter as well as the former. I know very well that the subject is unpleasant to you. So it is to me—pre-eminently unpleasant. But it is one which *we ought*, both of us, to force ourselves to consider. To *me* its importance is incalculable; and when you have read all I am about to write, you will perceive that it is a subject which by *you* can no longer be avoided, either in kindness or in conscience.

There are two ways of viewing the request I now renew. Looking at it from the first point of view, that of kindness, if you said—'Edward, I have no kind feeling for you. Don't talk to me of wounds or affronts, I don't care how much I wound or affront you,' then on *this* point I could say nothing. I could not appeal to feelings which did not exist. But you say you do feel kindly towards me, and would do anything to serve me. Well, then, you can serve me in no point so materially as this; and without this, all else is vain. What is it that I ask? First, that you will not put upon my wife a public affront which gives me sensible and constant pain; and, secondly, that you will allow me to be with you

finished play of 'Darnley' where the husband says to the wife—'Indulgence! what, was the word misapplied? I might have expected to find even in so fair a partner, a companion, a friend—a home. Can you deny that I have found them not? But when did I repine while you were happy? Wearied, exhausted, in all my cares, in all my anxieties, it soothed me to think that these, my "uncongenial habits," were adding to the joy of your youth.'

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upon those terms of unreserved affection and entire confidence which (as I will presently show you) are rendered *impossible* by the existing nature of our relative positions, however greatly we may both of us desire them.

The affront I complain of is this. I live in the same town with you. You refuse to visit my wife, or enter my house. My brother also displeased you by his marriage; but you enter his house, and visit his wife. You say you distinguish between the two cases. But the world cannot take the trouble to understand such a distinction. It merely sees that, the two brothers being both of age, and having both married gentlewomen, you are sufficiently reconciled to our marriages to see both William and myself, but that your visiting the wife of one, and not the wife of the other, is a marked insult to the wife unvisited. And, even supposing that I cared not a straw for my wife, an insult to her is none the less a double insult to me. The interests of married people (whether they themselves agree or not) are identical.

You say the world does not occupy itself about the matter. But unfortunately that is not the case. In the first place, the world always gossips about dissensions in families, however humble; in the next place, forgive me if I say that I am a very marked person. Every man who writes is talked of more or less; and, when once a man is talked of, all that belongs to him, or that he belongs to, is talked of also. The affront to me is therefore more known, and so more wounding, than it would be if I myself were less known. Besides, what can it be but galling in the last degree for our carriages to pass, and no salutation? For me to come to your house, and attend your receptions alone, and you never to be seen at mine? For my wife to be asked about you by persons who do not know the matter, whilst your name is sedulously avoided by those who do? It is an affront, not offered once and then over, but of daily, hourly, occurrence, which perpetually occasions me the greatest unhappiness and the deepest mortification.

In family differences, moreover, the world always takes two sides, and makes two parties. One will side with you, another with me. Whichever be the one defended, the result is equally injurious to both of us. I cannot but be deeply hurt by a defence which blames my mother. And any disrespectability thrown upon me is inevitably reflected upon you. This is the necessary condition of our relationship. If a person praising your conduct says, 'I dare say there is something against Mrs. Edward Bulwer which we don't know, but which justifies her mother-in-law's refusal to visit

her,' and then begins guessing, conjecturing, and inventing, every word so said against my wife falls with a slur upon all her connections; and you, as one of them, suffer with the rest. But how cruel a wound would such a gossip inflict upon *me*, how deep, how lasting an injury should I then sustain, because you had refused to my earnest entreaties the sacrifice of—what? A resentment only. I understand your reluctance to call here. But what does it arise from? A dislike, a sore and angry feeling. It can arise from nothing else; for there is not a single circumstance in which it could have any other origin. And, therefore, all you would sacrifice in taking from me a perpetual source of misery which embitters all my life, is a feeling not in itself so commendable, but what morality and magnanimity, apart from kindness, are opposed to its encouragement.

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The next point I beg you to consider is the obvious impossibility of our ever being, while this situation continues, on those terms of entire friendship and confidence with each other which I ardently desire, and to which I know you are not disinclined. The domestic affairs of the house you refuse to enter are topics which can never be touched on between us. But consider what this involves. Upon all that to every man is dearest and most familiar, all that lies closest to his heart, I cannot open mine to you. If you are prejudiced against a person who is bound up, not only with my affection, but my honour, it is clear that, throughout our intercourse, I must keep a perpetual guard upon my tongue in reference to all that concerns her, lest by an impulsive word, or careless expression, I do her some involuntary wrong. Yet how few things of an intimate and confidential nature can happen to a married man in which his wife is not more or less concerned. I am persuaded that you have not yet realised how perpetual is the pain caused me by a slight which no principle forbids you to remove. But if the matter were not (to myself at least) of an importance which transcends all reticence in alluding to the essential conditions of it, I would refrain from saying a word upon what I must call Duty. Duty, however, is exactly what demands the most detailed consideration in reference to those points on which the best and wisest persons are liable to be misled—I mean points of feeling.

And on this side of the question, first let me say that it is not fair to reply to me, 'You talk of duty, but did you fulfil your duty to me, by marrying against my wishes and entreaties?' Wrong done by one person is no justification for what is wrong in another.

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Still less can the maintenance of an indefensible sentiment or judgment by a person of mature age and experience be justified by the mistake of a young one, committed at that age when all conduct is impulsive. Even to me, what was excusable at twenty would not be excusable at thirty. It would be still less excusable at forty, and so on.

There is a second way of looking conscientiously at this question. All systems of morality, whether Pagan or Christian, concur in forbidding us to harbour feelings of deliberate and unreasoning unkindness towards any one. We have no warrant in conscience or duty for rejecting any opportunity of ascertaining whether our ill opinion of another is a *just* one. Such an opportunity I offer you, I urge it upon you, I entreat you not to reject it. Its claim to attention is specially strong when there is any reason to believe that the dislike or ill opinion it may tend to remove, has been groundless. Here there is such reason. I will tell you why. Some of the original causes for your ill opinion of Rosina are now proved to be erroneous. You imagined that if I married, I should, at a year's end (these were your words), 'be the most miserable of men.' That fear has not been realised. At least, if I am miserable, it is not from any disappointment in my wife's affection, or her conduct. This alone is sufficient reason why you should not refuse the means of testing by your own observation the truth of my assurance. To do so would be a duty, in the like circumstances, even to a person you had known for years, with ample opportunities of observing her character. It is doubly a duty towards one with whom you have had but the slightest possible acquaintance, when your dislike to her is admittedly founded upon rumours and reports. Every day brings forth instances of the falsity of such reports; and the person injured by them here is the wife of your son.

Thirdly, and this is the last point I shall urge, if Slander, which spares none of us (not even the wariest and best guarded), *did* whisper, if Envy, from whom none of us are free, *did* utter lies, against a friendless and unsheltered woman, placed in very unfortunate circumstances towards a mother of peculiar habits and tenets, who voluntarily abandoned her, and possessing attractions sufficient to awaken those jealousies which prey upon all but the stupid and ugly—if, I say, this did happen, and if it was in your eyes a just objection to my marriage with her, that woman is now my wife. Her cause is mine. By refusing to visit her, you are the first and only person to give substance to these false and cruel

rumours. You are putting a handle to any lies my enemies (and *I* at least have many) may invent. Our relationship admits of no neutrality. Not to visit my wife is to affront me. Now, ask yourself, I conjure you, if this should set afloat lying and malignant gossip, could your conscience absolve you from having helped, not only to embitter my life irremediably, but, what is far worse, to injure in the most vital point an innocent and unoffending person, who is disposed in all ways to show affection to you, and whose only fault, as regards yourself, is that she is my wife? It is in vain to say you do not do all this by refusing to visit her. I repeat, and the truth is clear, our relationship allows no neutrality.

I have now said all I wish to say. I have purposely put the matter mainly on the grounds of reason and duty; for on these grounds it is surest of your full consideration. I have purposely appealed to your strong sense of justice and rectitude rather than to any other feeling; because, knowing how conscientiously in all parts of your life you have ever sought your duty, and how unflinchingly you have followed it, I feel assured that you will not resent my present reliance on that knowledge. But none the less do I ask this of you as a great favour; and none the less lasting will be my gratitude for an action which, at all times, and in all events, I know you will be able to recall with conscientious satisfaction. Believe me, my dearest mother,

Your most affectionate son,

E. L. Bulwer.

This convincing argument, driven home with such force, respect, and affection, could not be resisted. My grandmother at once responded to the appeal, paid her visit to my mother, was dissatisfied with her reception, complained of it to my father, and, in reply to his defensive rejoinder, reminded him that she 'maintained' his wife. To this taunt, after some unavailing remonstrances, he sent a full and final answer in writing.

The Same to the Same.

Hatfield: Thursday.

When, some time ago, you informed me of your intention to allow me so large an income, I was perfectly aware of the great generosity of the offer. Nothing could have induced me to agree

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to your making so considerable a sacrifice but the conviction that, as the proposal could only arise from affection, so I could not more wound that affection than by refusing it. I felt, too, that my health was weak and reduced; that it had been greatly over-strained; that it required a long and considerable relaxation from mental harassment, for its recovery; that, without your proposal, I should not be justified in giving myself such relaxation; and that, as you were so sensible of this that your offer seemed, in great measure, to spring from the knowledge of it, so it would give you, I thought, a far greater pleasure to relieve me from the necessity of exertions which had become injurious, than to be withheld by me from a sacrifice for which nothing could repay you but my sense of its exceeding generosity and kindness. To have refused it at that moment would have been false pride. I accepted it with the warmest gratitude, and it was a pleasure to me to think I owed you so much.

But I must take leave to say, distinctly, that I did not consider this (I did not for a moment believe that *you* considered it) in the light of a '*maintenance*.' Maintenance I required from no human being. My own exertions had, and my own exertions yet could, maintain me and mine in all we required. I took it in this light (and in this light I thought it was given), that, whereas I could, alone, and always, but only by labour, confinement, and great mental anxiety, make more than 1,000*l*. a year, it was your wish, in offering me this sum, not to maintain me, for I was then (and for nearly three years I had been) maintaining myself, but to save me from that labour, confinement, and mental anxiety by which alone I could continue to do so.

Neither my wife nor myself were about to receive any more comforts than we had hitherto been enjoying. In accepting your kindness I proposed to surrender for the future (or, at least, considerably to lessen) the income which my literary exertions had till then procured me.

We should not have been better off in a worldly point of view. *She* would not have gained a single selfish advantage. *I*, it is true, would have gained something, nay much, but not in money. I should have gained an increase of tranquillity and health.

Viewing the matter in this light, as a proposal which it was neither discreditable nor dependent in me to accept, I was never more dismayed or humiliated than I felt at finding I had committed a great error in reasoning; that *you* viewed the matter in

a wholly different light, and that what *I* thought only (it was for *this* I was so grateful) the substitution of an easy income for a hard one, *you* regarded as a maintenance, and one, moreover, which rendered me so dependent that it gave you the right to taunt me with it.

I am not above an obligation. I think that to be grateful is a feeling as honourable and delightful as to be dependent is mean and revolting. But, in all obligations of money, the money itself must be so subordinate, that it is the generosity, the self-sacrifice, the delicacy of the benefactor, and not the money by itself, for which obligation is felt without reluctance or loss of self-respect by a really grateful and honourable mind.

If you had said that you maintained *me*, I should have felt it far less. But that I should subscribe to any arrangement which enables you to think that you maintain one whom you dislike and reproach, would imply in me so base and paltry a spirit, that I cannot help again and again recalling that sentence with the acutest pain. It does not fall upon my wife, though spoken *of* her, and *at* her. The whole humiliation of it falls on me. *Mine* is the reproach, not *hers*, if any person (much more, any person who does not love her) boasts of maintaining her, while I yet live, and can work. I had still some faint hope that you would allow it was only in a moment of vexation you said words so mortifying to me, and that you would disavow all permanent or serious meaning in them. I have been disappointed.

What remains to me to do is obvious. I feel still persuaded that at the time you made to me so generous a proposal, you did not see the offer as, according to your words, you now see it; and I shall always remember the affection which then dictated it with a gratitude much warmer, I fear, than I should have felt for it had you said those words some years hence, after I had incurred the *unconscious* meanness of contracting a debt I had not the ability to pay.

Firmly, then, and respectfully, I now return to my own resources and my own exertions. The sum you were so kind as to transfer to my account will have been paid back to yours before you receive this letter. The feelings that occasion this decision do not lessen my affection. They only render me, I hope, more worthy of yours. *Maintenance* is a word confined solely to *Charity*; and no person who retains the use of his limbs and brains deserves esteem if he stoops to receive charity for himself. Still less does he deserve

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it if he suffers his wife or children to be dependent on the charity of others.

I have now thrown off the most important part of that burden of vexation I still feel, on my own behalf. But I must say one word on the subject of that vexation which you tell me I have caused *you*.

My sole offence was illness. I had been ill, very ill, for two days. I came to you, ready to drop with sickness and exhaustion, without a moment's rest from a fatiguing journey, when I ought to have been in bed. Nor did I then say a single one of the words you are displeased with, until after you had made to me many painful observations which, in the peculiar circumstances of our meeting, I think you might have spared me. And what *did* I say that you can justly be surprised at? 'Could you,' I said, 'have wished my wife to come to the door to receive you with *empressement* after you had for three years refused to meet her?' I said, and I still say, that she would have been wanting in decorum, in good taste, in good feeling, ay, and also in respect both to yourself and to that disapproval which your absence had so strongly marked, if on such an occasion she had manifested either the worldly ease of a lady receiving a stranger, or the cordial familiarity of a kinswoman welcoming a kinswoman. She ought to have been strongly affected and overcome. And she was so.

I have said this much on her behalf, though the main part of my letter relates to an expression only wounding to myself. I am prepared for everything. I thank God that I am. Exertion finds me, not quite what I was some three years ago, but it finds me still more resolved, and still more persuaded that harassment, labour, broken health, yes, even a prison or death itself, are better than the sense of degradation.

E. L. Bulwer.

My grandmother had suffered much from the other persons implicated, and they from her; and not one of the three recalled the past with the smallest self-reproach. My mother, viewing as a wrong the slight which had been put upon her, would not accept the visit as a concession, or a condescension, to be welcomed with rapture. My father, jealous for his wife's dignity, shared her sentiments. My grandmother, having acted in opposition to her antipathies, probably looked

for a reception corresponding to her sense of the sacrifice. The mother-in-law thought of her own magnanimity, the daughter-in-law of self-respect. So the one demanded much, and the other yielded little, and this drew forth the speech to my father about 'maintenance.' The word could only have been spoken in pique. No one knew better than his mother that nothing would have induced him to sell his own, or his wife's, independence for an allowance; and after she had read his calm and noble letter—a letter equally high-minded and affectionate, generous and tender to her, and lofty in the expression of what was becoming to himself—I am at a loss to understand how, rather than retract an inconsiderate remark, she could leave him exposed to the evils he describes, though unconscious of the still more bitter griefs which were to be engendered by his ceaseless exasperating toil. The history is a signal example of the mischief which results from standing upon punctilios in making up differences, if only there is a known foundation of love. Had these three agreed to meet with the simple idea that the one great object was union, years of suffering would have been spared.

It is not a little singular that none of the three appears to have looked with the smallest ill-will upon an incident so big with trials. My grandmother continued to visit at my father's house, and sought many opportunities from which she might otherwise have shrunk of soothing his domestic susceptibilities. When they were not within visiting reach, she corresponded with his wife, who constantly expressed a strong sense of her kindness. Shortly after the birth of her second child, my mother wrote to her:—'Mrs. Marsh (the child's nurse) speaks with tears in her eyes of your immense kindness to her and her boy, as she calls him. I venture, dear madam, to tell you of *their* gratitude. Of *my own* I will say nothing, because it is quite impossible for me to express how much—how very much—I feel all your kindness to me.'

'I cannot express to you,' she says a little later, 'the grateful sense I entertain of your extreme kindness. I must

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tell you a very profane speech which her governess tells me my little girl made on receiving the grapes you sent her: "They tell me that God is the giver of all good, but I think it must be Mrs. Papa."' And in another letter she wrote:—'I am so glad to think poor dear Edward is with you, and not slaving himself to death. How proud you must be of such a son, and to think of all he owes to your training!' Just after she and my father were settled in Hertford Street, she said in a letter to Miss Greene: 'No, my dear Mary, it was not I who gave the 100*l.* to the Missionary Society, but Edward's mother; and she is a very generous as well as a very conscientious good woman.' To this she characteristically adds: 'As for poor me, why ten thousand a year would not be a penny too much for my living in London, and three thousand requires all the management I can bestow upon it; for which reason *my* humble charities never extend beyond Bibles and flannel petticoats.' I conclude these quotations with a remark from a letter addressed to my mother by Miss Landon: 'Having so often heard you say how kind Mrs. Bulwer Lytton has been to you, and how much you like her, it has struck me that you might like to give her one of my books; for which purpose I have great pleasure in sending you one.'

My father's letters in this chapter have an intimate relation to his works. If there be one sentiment which more conspicuously than any other pervades them all, it is the sentiment of personal honour, independence, and self-respect. I have heard it described as high-flown; but it was intensely genuine, and like a burning and a shining light within him which illuminated all the avenues of duty. Magniloquence is sometimes the natural language of magnanimity. My father created no character loftier than his own, and its natural stature was considerably above the average. If from his maturer works it is possible to extract more practical counsel than is commonly found in works of pure imagination, it is because their author had himself passed through the trials,

and surmounted the difficulties, of situations similar to those he describes. The voluntary poverty which flows from the sacrifice of fortune to honour had been his in its most painful form; for there is none more painful than the genteel poverty which extends the necessities to the appearances of life. And specially painful must it have been to a man like my father; who, fastidiously high-minded, would rather have starved than live under a pecuniary obligation. In the comedy of 'Money' the author, speaking his experiences through Clara, makes her say to her lover, 'A marriage of privation, of penury, of days that dread the morrow? I have seen such a lot. Never return to this again.' And afterwards, when she explains her rejection of his suit, she adds, 'My father, like you, was poor,—generous; gifted, like you, with genius,—ambition; sensitive, like you, to the least breath of insult. He married as you would have done; married one whose only dower was penury and care. I saw that genius a curse to itself. I saw that ambition wither to despair. I saw the struggle, the humiliation, the proud man's agony, the bitter life, the early death; and heard over his breathless clay my mother's groan of self-reproach. Was the woman you loved to repay you with such a doom?'—'We should have shared it,' Evelyn exclaims; and then she replies, 'Shared? Never let the woman who really loves comfort herself with such a delusion! In marriages like this the wife cannot share the burden. It is his, the husband's, to provide, to scheme, to work, to endure, to grind out his strong heart at the miserable wheel. The wife, alas! cannot share the struggle, she can but witness the despair.'

And with despair—or something not quite so sad—for a companion, the light may be darkened in the bosom of the wife; and wearied love, unless in natures of peculiar mould, suffer declension under the trial. My father's part was the struggle, if not the despair; the 'grinding out of the strong heart at the miserable wheel.' And to this he returned with dogged resolution for the next three years of his life.

CHAPTER XII.

'DEVEREUX.' 1829. ÆT. 26.

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My father had no sooner finished 'The Disowned' than he commenced a novel called 'Greville,' which he never completed. 'I have sought,' he said, in his essay on 'Prose Fiction,' 'to win approbation, not by the sameness of a single material, but by the contrast of many. Scarcely any one of the romances I have woven together resembles its neighbour.' His preference for variety probably induced him to abandon 'Greville.' It was trenching too closely upon the ground he had occupied in 'Pelham.' He determined, therefore, to set his story in the framework of another age, and to try an historical novel.

The splendour of Scott's success in that department had given birth to numerous feeble imitations of him. A great genius is seldom rivalled in the particulars which constitute his individuality. He stands alone in his special gifts to the end of time; and any writer who has true power in himself will study the model to enjoy it, and to profit by it, but not, after his years of pupilage, to copy it. My father ran no risk of such an error. The turn of his mind, and his method in fiction, were different from Scott's. Scott drew his raw materials from history and legendary lore; but these were to him only hints for picturesque scenes which often deviated widely from the pattern of past realities. History was in his novels what fancy chose to make it. It was with his characters as with their accompaniments. They were largely

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I

Father the Hero's - the youngest - bade adieu to the old Hall & his only brother - prayed to the grim portraits of his Ancestors to inspire him - & set out - to join as a volunteer - the armies of that Louis afterwards surnamed le grand. - ~~There let us~~ Of him I shall say but little: - ~~leave him for the present~~ - the life of an

the creatures of a fancy, facile in invention—a fancy informed by shrewd knowledge of the world, but representing the mimic actors under guises of its own devising, and delighting more in depicting what was outward in men than in unfolding the inward operations of passion. The majority of my father's novels, on the contrary, were derived, not from his fancy, but from his feelings. His imagination liked to work upon the facts of his life and the experiences of his heart; and when he was dealing with natures dissimilar to his own his standard of insight was that which he exercised upon himself. Less picturesque than Scott, he went deeper into the hidden emotions of men. The difference may be seen in his lovers. They are not lay figures. We know what his women feel better than how they look. For his inferiority, then, in the scenic decoration of history he might expect to find compensation in his profounder treatment of passions and motives; in the human machinery and springs of conduct, as distinguished from the fascinating adjuncts of Scott.

He was confident of the result, and this was not a good omen with him. 'I have always found,' he says, 'that one is never so successful as when one is least sanguine. I fell into the deepest despondency about "Pompeii" and "Eugene Aram," and was certain, nay presumptuous, about "Devereux," which is the least generally popular of my writings.' His circumstances were the obvious cause of the failure. 'If the novelist,' he says in his essay on 'Art in Fiction,' 'aims at lofty and permanent effects, he will remember that to execute grandly he must conceive nobly. He will suffer the subject he selects to lie long in his mind, to be revolved, meditated, brooded over.' Of 'Devereux' the conception and execution were simultaneous, and the execution was as rapid as it was immediate. The pecuniary calls upon the author did not permit him to pause.

He selected the time of Queen Anne for his experiment, and was well acquainted with the history and literature of her

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reign. But the particularities of the age into which his narrative is thrown are not intertwined with the inner threads of it. The manners and customs described appear but as patches on the surface, rather clumsily applied. The delightful panorama, more or less faithful, which Scott would have presented to us is not there. The historical groundwork seems forced and unreal, and the story suffers by this fruitless attempt at illusion. Such of the characters as are historical have the same defect. Bolingbroke, Swift, Addison, Steele, Pope, and others, are brought before us: and, a literary genius being known by his writings, either his talk must conform to this criterion, or else he must talk in a style unlike his own, and then the representation disappoints the expectations which have been raised. Every effort of the kind has been a failure. No man can appropriate to himself in their genuine force the attributes of half-a-dozen geniuses, or even of one. He must be content with his own. The speeches coined for Swifts and Addisons will be manifest counterfeits; and, however brilliant they may be, they will not fit the names they bear.

There remains that part of the story which is independent of the historical elements, and which forms the bulk of the work. Nowhere is the haste more apparent. The plot is crudely constructed. The characters and dialogue are not direct from nature. They are in a great degree theatrical and artificial, the unmistakable emanations of a mind which is reduced to manufacture from the want of leisure to create. The style also is frequently of a conventional cast; and the descriptions and conversations are unduly spun out. The powers of the writer shed a gleam of embellishment over the faults, but they are not concealed by it; and, notwithstanding the excellencies of 'Pelham,' if my father had written nothing after 'Devereux' he would not have needed a biographer.

Like most of his works, 'Devereux' has its autobiographical allusions, if that epithet may be applied to situations in the story which reflect some reality of the author's life. In the

Autobiography proper he has mentioned my grandfather's desire to make Knebworth an appendage to his Norfolk estate, and the desire not less strong of my grandmother to keep it apart. The Knebworth property not being entailed, it rested with herself to devolve it, if she pleased, on a distinct representative of her own line; but throughout her long widowhood she had not disclosed her intentions to any of her sons. The eldest might be presumed to share his father's views. The younger sons might expect her to give effect to her own wishes. In 'Devereux' the author had two objects. One was to exhibit the manners of a past generation, the other to dramatise the workings of jealousy; and the position of the three brothers in relation to the Knebworth estate furnished him with a fact from which to deduce the operations of the passion. He assumed a similar case in which rival interests are supposed to get the better of fraternal feeling, and his imagination suggested the rest.

Again, between the benevolent Abbé Kinsela, whom my father describes in his Autobiography, and the malignant Abbé Montreuil, who is the evil genius of the novel, there is no moral resemblance; yet I cannot think it a fanciful conjecture that the idea of an astute and accomplished Jesuit, engaged in the secret politics of European courts, and attaching himself to a young man of promise in the hope of shaping his pupil's career to his own purposes, may have had its origin in some reminiscence of his Paris friend. The Irish Jesuit nowhere reappears in connection with my father's life; and possibly the friendship of the real, like that of the fictitious Abbé, may have been changed into enmity or alienation by the rejection of his schemes.

If contemporary criticism were any test of literary merit, or permanent popularity, the author of 'Devereux' might have flattered himself that his sanguine expectation of its success had been fulfilled. The majority of the reviews spoke of this novel much more favourably than they had spoken of

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his previous works, or than they afterwards spoke of later ones, incontestably and greatly superior to it. The world of readers dissented from the verdict of the reviewers; and my father's maturer judgment coincided with theirs. The work was published on the 7th of July, 1829, when its author's age was just twenty-six. An intelligent critic in the 'Examiner' expressed his belief 'that Mr. Bulwer had written "Pelham" for his own pleasure, "The Disowned" for his bookseller, and "Devereux" for the support of his fame with the public.' But the truth is he had written 'Devereux' for the support of his wife and children. In this respect it succeeded, and in this alone. His name had risen steadily in market value; and whereas he got 500*l.* for the copyright of 'Pelham,' and 800*l.* for 'The Disowned,' for 'Devereux' he got 1,500*l.*

One singular illustration of the interest with which the work was read when it first appeared must not be omitted from this account of it. The illustration is contained in the first of some letters upon which my father has written this endorsement:—'Very curious. From the notorious Harriet Wilson, whose memoirs made a sensation in my college days. Of course I never acceded to her wish to know me. The letters were written to me when I first came up to town, after my marriage, and in my second year of authorship.'

Harriet Wilson's memoirs appeared in 1825, and Walter Scott says of them—'There is some good retailing of conversations, in which the style of the speakers, so far as known to me, is exactly imitated.' He had an impression of having supped with her at the house of Monk Lewis twenty years before, and says, 'She was far from beautiful, but a smart saucy girl with good eyes, and dark hair, and the manners of a wild schoolboy.' That the 'smart saucy girl' survived in the woman is shown by the extracts from her letters to my father.

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From Harriet Wilson (*extracts*).

I have disliked reading all my life ; except Shakespeare's plays, because these are true to nature and so am I. 'Pelham' was not to my taste, for I thought all its light chit-chat pedantic, and not nearly so good as my own. But it is a sensible book and a wise one ; its fancies brilliant, its thoughts deep, its observations true ; and so—I got to the end of it, and felt obliged to you for writing a book which had not bored me. 'The Disowned,' I liked better. But as for that imbecile (Mordaunt) who, like a helpless blockhead, allowed his wife to be starved,—his want of what *I* call philosophy made me sick. Do you consider a man virtuous, or sensible, whose little soul makes him ashamed of doing his duty in the state of life to which it has pleased God to call him? He had arms and legs, health and intelligence. Why did he not clean his wife's room, whitewash the walls of it, earn by his daily work a mutton-chop, and then fry it for her himself *à la Maintenon*? In England there is no such thing as starving for an intelligent man who will turn his hand to anything rather than see the beloved of his soul dying of hunger. No! that man ought to have been sent to the treadmill.

Now for 'Devereux.' I have nearly finished the first volume, and am so charmed with it that I have laid it aside to tell you how proud I should feel if you were disposed to honour me with your acquaintance. I say this because life is too short and too miserable to risk the loss of a possible pleasure by not asking for it. And it is just *possible* that we might find some sort of innocent pleasure in being acquainted with each other. I am not a bit agreeable, however, except to those who are predisposed to like me, and so take at once to what is likable in my character. For I am very shy ; and when people do not encourage me by showing this predisposition, I feel *gênée*, and am therefore not amiable. I am also very ignorant : can't even spell correctly.[1] But then there is this advantage in my ignorance. All you clever men, and especially you clever writers, are copies of something or other into which nature has been manufactured already. I am nature itself. If I say anything that strikes or pleases you, you may be sure that it comes from my own head or my own heart, and not from books or speeches made out of the heads and hearts of other people. I was never a general

[1] Her memoirs illustrate the truth of this confession. Their orthography is not the least original part of them.

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favourite ; but no one likes me *a little*, nor, having once known me, ever forgets me. *Qu'en pensez-vous ?* Perhaps you would like my society better than I should like yours. After all, *entre nous*, I like contemplative people, and *so far* you would suit my taste. But if there is no comedy in your composition, none of the amiable folly of romance, without which no man has a good heart, we should bore each other.

I could write you a much more sensible letter by copying the style of some of my correspondents and consulting my dictionary. But this would be too troublesome. And, after all, your choosing to make my acquaintance is such a forlorn hope. The chances are five hundred to one against me. Yet I am not ugly, as they describe me in the newspapers ; but, on the contrary, rather handsome. Particularly by candle-light, and when I am amused. I am now just forty-three, very *journalière*, and often *joliment abattue*, but never very ugly in the face, and in person just as pretty as ever ; though this does not appear under the disguise of my costume, which is much more loose than my morals. In spite of all the newspapers say about them, my morals are *not* loose. I am now a true and faithful wife, leading as innocent a life as any hermit well can ; and if my husband, Mr. Rochfort, knew that you allowed me the advantage of making your acquaintance it would give him the greatest possible pleasure. I believe that you also are married ; but you will do me a great injustice if you suppose that I wish or expect you to neglect others for so insignificant a person as myself. We grow humble as we grow old. I am weary of the world in general. I care little for any sort of society, and I solicit the honour of your acquaintance with the full knowledge and conviction that any sentiment resembling love for me—or even the most passing caprice—is entirely out of the chapter of possibilities. No wife would pay me the compliment of objecting to my occasional enjoyment of a little innocent conversation with the most sensible young man I know. ‘ But,’ you say, ‘ Madam, you do *not* know me.’ Yes, sir, I do ; and perhaps I know the best of you. It is in your books, and I know them better than many people know their intimate acquaintances.

The beginning of ‘ Devereux ’ is in my humble opinion quite perfect. I am sure that Sir Walter Scott could not (even *I* could not) improve a line or a thought of it. But you both fall off in the love scenes. These you write from memory, from fancy, from anything but the real thrill of romance. The fault (as I said to the

Duke of Beaufort [1]) is not in your heart, but your want of heart. I will tell you what would make a perfect novel. You write it—all but the love scenes. Leave those to me. CHAP. XII. ÆT. 26

This letter was followed by another, complaining that it had not been answered.

October 1, *deux heures après minuit.*

My fire is out and my head is aching. But I cannot rest till I have expressed to you my regret that you not only refuse to see me, but have not even condescended to acknowledge my letter. *On sait à peu près ce qu'on vaut*, and therefore I had made up my mind to endure with indifference your silent contempt. But it has lasted six weeks, and my philosophy can last no longer. Lord Byron did not refuse to make my acquaintance. They say you are morose. But no one is ever morose with me. I inherit from my dear mother a certain softness as well as archness of disposition which disarms morosity. *Mais enfin !* If you won't be friends with me you won't, and your neglect must be borne by me *like a man* ; for in spite of my effeminate qualities I am, as Lord Ponsonby declared, a 'good fellow.' In which capacity I forgive you for cutting me : I wish you every prosperity and happiness which can be obtained, in a world *fait exprès pour nous enrager*, and I shall always continue to think of you with highest possible respect.

HARRIETTE ROCHFORT.

And then, after the lapse of several years, comes the following still more characteristic and typical communication.

2, North Cottages, near the Catholic Chapel, Chelsea.

Dear Sir,—Years ago when I was a sinner, and still a good-looking one, I thought you right to refuse me the honour of your acquaintance. But now,—now I have been 'born again,' as the Methodists say, and am a saint. What is more, I am a dying saint. Very old, very sick, desperately ill indeed, and the mind wears out with the body. Nearly a year ago I was received into the bosom of the Catholic Church by baptism and confession with confirmation, &c., after six months' *hard study*. I did not think I could ever read so hard, or so many books of controversy, both Protestant and Catholic. So intense was my curiosity that for many months I neither slept nor dined without a pile of Catholic books on one side of me, and another, larger still, of Protestant books on the

[1] This alludes to a scene described in her memoirs.

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other side of me. Once or twice a week a most venerable Catholic priest and preacher came to hear and answer all my objections, with the patience of a true saint. To conclude, I am now a strict Catholic on conviction. Faith is a supernatural gift. I could not get rid of mine if I would, and I should be wretched without it. I can do nothing, and love nothing, *coldly*. I was created for love; and now all the love my heart is capable of is turned to God. I was never taught religion by my parents or lovers. I was always, what I still am, a bigot in my distaste of the Protestant creed and all its sects. For a while I also disliked Popery, according to the fashion. But ultimately, I could not resist the lectures of my revered priest Dr. Wiseman, or the whispers of my own conscience which said to me, *Your destiny is to die a Catholic*. I go to Mass daily, weak and suffering as I am; and to the Communion Table twice a month. I have now as much distaste of all worldly things as if I were a nun. My life is the life of a hermit. My dear, good, innocent virgin priest has little time to visit me, though he does not want the inclination, for he holds me up as an example to all good Catholics. I hate, as I have ever hated, stupid society, and so my doors are denied to everyone. But it would much honour and gratify me if I might be refreshed by your conversation, though it were but for a few moments once a year. You cannot now mistrust my motives. I am old and sick. When I was young and admired I was never unfaithful to those I loved. And I never loved any of you as I now love God. Who could wilfully offend what they love? I have no object but the gratification I know I should feel in talking for a few moments to a person who could understand me. I tell everything to my confessor, and have told him that of all things I should like to converse with you before I die.

Yours, dear sir, truly,

H. Du Bochet.

Rechristened, Mary Magdalen. By my own desire at the Catholic Confirmation.

And so fades away this passing glimpse of two curious, ever-recurrent types of character. *Sic itur ad astra!* [1]

[1] This interesting letter is undated. It would appear to have been sent by hand, for the paper bears no postmark. Even the watermark is wanting, and there is nothing to indicate the year in which it was written.

Vol III

Paul Clifford

I

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Chapter. XI

"Falsehood in him was art the useless lie
"Of boasting pride or laughing vanity
"It was the painful — the persuading art"
&c

On wilt the Horses — off to Canterbury
Tramp — tramp o'er pebble & splash — Splash thro' puddle
Hurrah! — how swiftly Speeds the Post so merry! —

Crabbe

++ ×××××××

Misfortunes are like the creatures of Cadmus —
they destroy one another! — Roused from
the torpor of mind occasioned by the loss
of her lover at the sudden illness of the Squire
Lucy had no thought for herself — no
thought for any one for any thing but her
father — till long after the Earth had closed
over his remains. — The very actions of
the latter priest was less dangerous than
the Spirit of the former. — and when that
first keenness of Sorrow past away — &
her mind gradually & mechanically
returned to the remembrance of Clifford,
it was with an ~~last fatal~~ intensity
less stern & less fatal to her health —

CHAPTER XIII.

'PAUL CLIFFORD.' 1830. ÆT. 28.

THE publication of 'Devereux' and that of 'Paul Clifford' are two dates standing close together in my father's first period of authorship. But between the relative merits of these books there is an immense distance.

'Paul Clifford,' of which the first edition was published on May 4, 1830, and the second on August 27 in the same year,[1] is, I think, the first of that class of fictions, now common enough in England and elsewhere, which the Germans designate *Tendenzstücke*.[2] The ostensible object of the book was, as stated by its author in his preface to a later edition of it, 'to draw attention to two errors in our penal institutions, viz. a vicious Prison Discipline, and a sanguinary Penal Code.'

It has, under a misconception of that object, been cited by Louis Blanc and other French philanthropists, as evidence that my father advocated the abolition of capital punishment.[3] But he did nothing of the kind. His objection was, not to capital punishment, but to the promiscuous application of it,

[1] Not in 1831, as generally stated in previous notices of my father's life.

[2] Such, e.g., as *Oliver Twist*, *Alton Locke*, *Never too Late to Mend*, &c. It seems to me impossible to describe *Caleb Williams* as a tendency novel, in the conventional sense of the term. Its object is the presentation of a psychological problem, not (in the first instance, at any rate) the reform of a law, an institution, or a policy.

[3] 'Ajoutez à cela que la peine de mort en Angleterre a contre elle aujourd'hui plus d'un livre sage et puissant. Puis-je omettre de mentionner le beau, le philosophique roman de Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, *Paul Clifford*?' &c. &c.—Louis Blanc in *Le Temps* of February 5, 1864.

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coupled with a total neglect of the most elementary principles of prison discipline. And to this he objected, for the same reason which made him in all things a conservative reformer, on the broad ground that destruction is irrational in every case where improvement has a balance of practical advantages in its favour.

To appreciate the object proposed in 'Paul Clifford,' it is necessary to recall the condition of the criminal law, and the system of prison management, at the time when it was written.

Horse, sheep, cattle, and letter-stealing were offences still punishable by death. Only a few years earlier, men had been hanged for stealing five shillings' worth of property; and prisoners' counsel were not permitted to address the jury in capital cases.

'In the seven years from 1819 to 1825, both inclusive,' it is said in the postscript to the fourth volume of the 'Newgate Calendar,' 'the total number of persons committed for trial in England and Wales was 93,718: viz.—78,918 males, and 14,800 females; against 12,426 on whom no bills were found. Of these, 17,874 were acquitted: and of the remaining 63,418 no fewer than 7,770 were executed—an average of nearly 83 annually. Large as this number is, it is very small in comparison with the extraordinary number of those on whom the awful sentence was passed. And it must also be remembered that juries frequently find offenders guilty of stealing to the value of thirty-nine shillings only, when the property is proved to be worth ten or twenty times that sum; a pious fraud to which they are driven by the sanguinary character of our criminal code, even to the violation of their oaths.

'The offences made capital by the law of England amount to about 223. Of these 6 were so made in the course of the one hundred and fifty years that elapsed from Edward III. to Henry VII.; 30 in the next one hundred and fifty years from Henry VII. to Charles II.; and 187 in the last one

hundred and fifty years. Taking another view of these enactments, 4 offences were made capital under the Plantagenets: 27 under the Tudors: 36 under the Stuarts: and 156 under the family of Brunswick. More offences were made capital under the single reign of George III. than during the reigns of all the Plantagenets, Tudors, and Stuarts put together. There are persons now living at whose birth the number of capital offences did not exceed 70, and during whose lives such offences have been multiplied more than threefold.

'If we inquire whether with this increasing severity crime has been kept under, the answer is very much the reverse. But the fact is, as we have already shown, that the severity is more nominal than real. Out of an average of 110 on whom the awful sentence is annually passed, the number executed does not quite average 83. Among those who are thus solemnly exhorted to prepare for another world, a large proportion know that their offence is one for which the awful punishment is never inflicted. What beneficial effect can result from the mere ceremony? In the name of reason and common sense what purpose is answered by keeping the statute-book in this state?

'We have already said that the number executed in the seven years of 1819 to 1825 was 579. Their offences were as follows:—Arson and other wilful burning of property 10. Burglary 128. Cattle-stealing 2. Maliciously killing 1. Forgery and uttering forged instruments 62. Horse-stealing 21. House-breaking in the daytime and larceny 9. Larceny in dwelling-houses to the value of forty shillings 27. Secreting and stealing letters containing bank notes 5. Murder 101. Shooting at, stabbing, and administering poison with intent to murder, 30. Rape 31. Riot (remaining assembled with rioters one hour after the Riot Act had been read) 1. Robbery from the person on the highway and other places 95. Sacrilege 2. Sheep-stealing 29. Unnatural offences 15.

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High treason 5. Total number of persons executed on the above charges 579.'

From these figures it appears that, of all the persons who were hanged in England between the years 1819 and 1825 inclusive, less than one-fifth were guilty of the crime to which capital punishment is now confined.

The publication of 'Paul Clifford' did much to stimulate public opinion in favour of carrying Criminal Law Reform far beyond the point at which it had been left by the labours of Romilly: and the book itself was an incident in my father's constant course of endeavour to improve the condition of that large portion of the population which is most tempted to crime through poverty and ignorance,—not by the proclamation of utopian promises, or recourse to violent constitutional changes, but through a better intellectual training facilitated by timely administrative reforms.

For some time after the date of 'Paul Clifford,' however, the idea of associating reformation with punishment was still unfamiliar to the public mind, and greatly mistrusted by the highest legal authorities. Lord Eldon declared his conviction in 1832 that the fear of death was a most effectual preventive to minor offences, and that after the experience of half a century he had never known a lawyer or a politician able to point out to him a satisfactory substitute.

The lightness of the offences for which people were hanged diminished the infamy attaching to the punishment. Goethe, in his autobiography, tells us that, just before the composition of 'Werther,' when he was contemplating suicide and considering what might be the least disagreeable forms of it, he rejected hanging as ignoble. But, he adds, in England a man might adopt it 'because in that country one sees, from youth upwards, so many persons hanged *without the punishment being precisely dishonourable*.' [1]

At a later date the prisons of England and Wales were

[1] Book XIII.

described by the Committee on whose Report the Bill of 1835 was founded, as places where old offenders were confirmed in iniquity, and young ones trained up to it. The Scotch prisons were worse. But while my father objected to the barbarous and undiscriminating treatment of our criminal classes, on the ground that it was irrational, the indiscriminate sentimentality of their subsequent treatment appeared to him, for just the same reason, equally objectionable. He was at all times in favour of subjecting habitual and incorrigible criminals to a restraint from which they are still exempt, and of inflicting severe corporal punishment upon hardened ruffianism.[1]

The advocacy, however, of a reform in our treatment of the criminal classes was only the *ostensible* purpose of this book. Other ends less apparent, but more far-reaching, are aimed at by its good-humoured satire on the anomalies of a complex and artificial society in the Tomlinsoniana and the general conception of the story.

It is not in its immediate purpose, nor is it in its superficial allegory (which is rather an excrescence), that the real power of 'Paul Clifford' is best displayed. The sketchy caricatures of certain eminent persons, incidentally introduced into scenes of low life as a cursory satire upon high life, appear to me the least attractive features of the work; especially now that they have lost whatever passing interest they may have formerly derived from the gossip or the humours of the day.

The idea of representing the 'Ruling Classes,' not maliciously, but whimsically, in the characters of highwaymen,

[1] *The Rogue's Recipe.*

Your honest fool a rogue to make
As great as can be seen, sir,
Two hacknied rogues you first must take,
Then place your fool between, sir.

Virtue's a dunghill cock, ashamed
Of self when pair'd with game ones;
And wildest elephants are tamed
If stuck between two tame ones.

—Song by Long Ned in *Paul Clifford.*

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and the 'British Public' in that of their admiring victim,[1] though well suited for a short *jeu d'esprit*, was incapable of playing any important part in the wider conception of this fiction. The plan was not new. Gay had already embodied it in his 'Beggar's Opera;' and the notion of giving it a more extended application is stated by my father, in the dedicatory preface, to have been suggested by Godwin.

'I am indebted,' he says, 'for the original idea of "Paul Clifford" to a gentleman of considerable distinction in literature, whose kindness to me is one of my most grateful remembrances. This idea, had the work been shorter, would have pervaded the whole. As it is, it will be found embodied in those parts which are likely, I think, to be the most popular, such as the scene at "Gentleman George's," the sketch of "Bachelor Bill," &c. But, in justice to my friend, I should add that I have given a very inadequate form to his conception, and have made use of it rather as an adjunct to my story than as the groundwork or the principal feature of it.[2] For the personality of any of the caricatures

[1] 'Augustus Tomlinson, rising with one hand in his breeches pocket and the other stretched out, said, "Gentlemen,—I move that Paul Lovett be again chosen as our captain. . . . Life is short. Why should speeches be long? Our lives perhaps are shorter than the lives of other men: why should not our harangues be of a suitable brevity? Gentlemen, I shall say but one word in favour of my excellent friend. . . . A Prime Minister is not more useful to his followers, or more burdensome to the public (*loud plaudits*). What I shall urge in his favour is simply this. The man whom opposite parties unite in praising must have supereminent merit. Of all your companions, gentlemen, Paul Lovett is the only man who to that merit can advance a claim (*applause*). You all know, gentlemen, that our body has long been divided into two factions, each jealous of the other, each desirous of ascendency, and each emulous which shall put the greatest number of fingers into the public pie. In the language of the vulgar, the one faction would be called "Swindlers," and the other "Highwaymen." I, gentlemen, who am fond of finding new names for things and persons, and am a bit of a politician, call the one *Whigs* and the other *Tories* (*clamorous cheering*). Of the former body I am esteemed an influential member. Of the latter faction Mr. Bags is justly considered a shining ornament.'—*Paul Clifford*, chap. xviii.

[2] This idea of Godwin's probably suggested the title of 'Masks and Faces,' which my father at one time thought of giving to the work: a title which, if adopted, would have been not only inadequate but altogether misleading.

I alone am responsible. All that my friend suggested was the satirical adaptation of living personages to fictitious characters in the station or profession of life adorned by "Old Bags" and "Long Ned," &c. I mention this because it is only fair that I should take the chances of offence upon myself; though the broadness and evident want of malice in these caricatures will, I venture to foretell, make those who are caricatured by them the first,—perhaps the only,—persons to laugh at the exaggerated resemblance.'

This expectation was justified by the good nature of the sketches, and fulfilled by the good humour of the persons sketched. Their names were mentioned by my mother in a letter to Miss Greene:—

'To save you the trouble of guessing them,' she says, 'I will tell you who are the characters. "Gentleman George" is the King;[1] "Fighting Attie," the Duke of Wellington;[2]

[1] '"Have you never heard of Gentleman George?" "What! the noted head of a flash public-house in the country? To be sure I have, often; my poor nurse, Dame Lobkins, used to say he was the best-spoken man in the trade!" "Ay, so he is still. In his youth George was a very handsome fellow, but a little too fond of his lass and his bottle to please his father, a very staid old gentleman, who walked about on Sundays with a bob-wig and a gold-headed cane, and was a much better farmer on week days than he was head of a public-house. George used to be a remarkably smart-dressed fellow, and so he is to this day. He has a great deal of wit, is a very good whist-player, has a capital cellar, and is so fond of seeing his friends drunk that he bought some time ago a large pewter measure in which six men can stand upright. The girls, or rather the old women, to whom he used to be much more civil of the two, always liked him; they say, nothing is so fine as his fine speeches, and they give him the title of '*Gentleman* George.' He is a nice kind-hearted man in many things. Pray Heaven we shall have no cause to miss him when he departs. And I do not think we shall, either; for his brother, who, poor fellow, has been a long time in the Fleet, is a sensible dog in his way, and will succeed him. At all events, Bill Squareyards, or Mariner Bill (as we call him), will, I fancy, be more scrupulous about the public stock than Gentleman George, who, to say the truth, takes a most gentlemanlike share of our common purse." "What, is he avaricious?" "Quite the reverse. But he is so cursedly fond of building, he invests all *his* money (and wants us to invest all *ours*) in houses; and there's one confounded dog of a bricklayer who runs him up terrible bills,—a fellow called 'Cunning Nat,' who is equally adroit in spoiling ground and improving *ground rent.*"'—*Paul Clifford*, chap. x.

[2] '"Here, younker," said Gentleman George, "here's a fine fellow at my right hand" (the person thus designated was a thin, military-looking fellow in

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"Old Bags," Lord Eldon;[1] "Long Ned," Lord Ellenborough;[2] "Scarlet Jem," Sir James Scarlet;[3] "Bachelor Bill," the Duke of Devonshire;[4] "The Sallow Gentleman,"

a shabby riding-frock, and with a commanding, bold, aquiline countenance, a little the worse for wear), "an old soldier. Fighting Attie, we calls him. He's a devil on the road. 'Halt—deliver—must and shall.' 'Can't and shan't.' 'Do as I bid you, or go to the devil.' That's all Fighting Attie's palaver, and, 'sdeath, it has a wonderful way of coming to the point. But the highflyers don't like him." '—*Ibid.*

[1] 'It was edifying to hear the rascals. So nice was their language, and so honest their enthusiasm for their own interests, you might have imagined you were listening to a coterie of Cabinet Ministers, conferring on taxes, or debating about perquisites. "Long may the *Commons* flourish!" said punning Georgie, filling his glass. "'Tis by the commons we're fed, and may they never know cultivation!" "A little moderate cultivation of the commons," said Augustus Tomlinson modestly, "might (to speak frankly) not be amiss. For it would decoy people into the belief that they might travel safely; and, after all, a hedge or a barley field is as good for us as a barren heath, where we have no shelter if once pursued." "You talks nonsense, you spooney," cried a robber of note, named Bagshot, who, being old, and having been a lawyer's footboy, was sometimes called "Old Bags." "You talks nonsense. These innovating ploughs are the ruin of us. Every blade of corn on a common is an encroachment on the rights of the Gemmen Highwaymen. I'm old, and mayn't live to see these things, but mark my words, a time will come when a man may go from Lunnon to Johnny Groat's without losing a penny by one of us; when Hownslow will be safe, and Finchley secure. My eyes, what a sad thing for *us* that'll be!" The venerable old man became suddenly silent, and the tears started to his eyes.'—*Paul Clifford*, chap. x. Although the predictions of 'Old Bags' had been fulfilled before *Paul Clifford* was written, the age of highwaymen could still be remembered by the generation to which it was addressed. In 1826 (only four years previous to the publication of this work) Lord Carnarvon had stated in the House of Lords that a friend of his had within his own recollection 'been robbed on the highway; another wounded by a shot fired at him by a footpad; and a third had narrowly escaped with his life by seizing the muzzle of the pistol which the robber had thrust into his carriage, and wresting it out of his hand.'—Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates.*

[2] '"As for the cove on the other side," continued the host of the "Jolly Angler," pointing to Long Ned, "all I can say of him, good, bad, or indifferent, is that he has an unkimmon fine head of hair." '—*Paul Clifford*, chap. x.

[3] '"That gentleman," said he, "is Scarlet Jem, a dangerous fellow for a *press*; though he says he likes robbing alone now, for a general press is not half such a good thing as it used to be formerly. You have no idea what a hand at disguising himself is Scarlet Jem. He has an old wig in which he generally does business, and you wouldn't know him again when he conceals himself under the wig. Oh, he's a precious rogue, is Scarlet Jem!"'

[4] "'This personage was of Devonshire extraction. His mother had kept the pleasantest public-house in town, and at her death Bill succeeded to her property and popularity. . . .' κ. τ. λ.—*Ibid.* chap. iv.

Mr. Huskisson;[1] "Harry Finish," Henry De Ros; "Allfair," Lord Alvanly; "Augustus Tomlinson," the Whigs in general; "Peter MacGrawler," the Scotch ditto. *Et voilà tout!*'

The Duke of Devonshire was so pleased with the caricature of himself in 'Paul Clifford' that he left his name on the author as 'Bachelor Bill.' And although these little pen-and-ink portraits were broadly exaggerated in every feature, no one, from His Majesty downwards, either felt, or had any cause to feel, personally hurt by a banter which, on the whole, was of a rather flattering character. The single exception is in the odious person of Peter MacGrawler.

Journalism was yearly growing a more influential and remunerative calling. A large number of energetic, thrifty, and more or less impecunious young men annually issued from the Scotch Universities. These young men found in the pay of the wealthy English press a congenial means of subsistence. The staff of most of the London journals, from the editor downwards, was said to consist chiefly of Scotchmen, who were thought by the writers of books not to exercise their functions meekly. In the preface of 'Paul Clifford' my father says that, in his case, critics, enemies, and Scotchmen, were commonly appellations for the same thing; that it was difficult seriously to dislike the land that had produced Burns, Scott, and Campbell; that our fellow-subjects on the other side of the Tweed had, nevertheless, the foible of believing that Provi-

[1] *Lyric version of Mr. Huskisson's resignation.*

Attie.—'Rise at six—dine at two—
Rob your man without ado—
Such my maxims—if you doubt
Their wisdom—*to the right about.*
[*Signing to the Sallow Gentleman to send up the brandy bowl.*]
'Pass round, —— of a gun,
You musky, dusky, *husky son.*'
Husky.—'Attie, the bingo's now with me,
I can't resign it yet, d'ye see.'
Attie.—'Resign it, resign it—cease your dust,
You *have* resigned it—and you *must.*'
[*Takes the bowl from him.*]—*Paul Clifford*, chap. x.

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dence had made them a gift of England; that they were preposterously angry if an Englishman interfered with their monopoly, and got ever so small a name and fortune in his own country; and that as, when we rise a step in the world, we are sure to be abused, so, nine times out of ten, we shall find on inquiry that the abuse has been uttered in broad Scotch. He said that his retaliation was in the spirit of English warfare, blows one moment and good humour the next. And perhaps in the very extravagance of the portrait of MacGrawler we may detect the intermixture of a good-humoured caricature.

He is described as a crapulous literary reptile without principle of any kind. In the opening scenes of 'Paul Clifford' we find him living in the back slums of Whitechapel or St. Giles's, and employed, in the capacity of a scurrilous critic, upon an obscure journal called 'The Assinæum.' The trade not being profitable, he descends (if a descent it be) from murdering reputations to picking pockets. Unscrupulous, yet always unsuccessful, he sinks lower and lower in crime and destitution, till at last he becomes the menial of the 'gentlemen highwaymen,' whose leader is Paul Clifford. As an object of charity they shelter and feed him, and he, in return, betrays them to the gallows.

Such a character is not uncommon in the criminal class. Nor is there anything incompatible between the vices of this profligate and the slender education which enables him to write 'smart' articles for an obscure newspaper. The annals of crime abundantly exhibit the low tastes, mean shifts, and vile companionship, into which men have fallen with a measure of knowledge and cleverness unaccompanied by principle. But it is impossible to imagine a whole group of educated men infected by the qualities ascribed to Peter MacGrawler. Taken, therefore, as a satire, its exaggeration destroys its force.

And the want of likeness is increased by the name of the periodical MacGrawler serves. This would naturally be sup-

posed to refer to the 'Athenæum:' a conclusion adopted by the conductors of that journal, who pointed out in their notice of 'Paul Clifford' that one of the specimens given in the novel of the species of criticism written by MacGrawler for the 'Assinæum' contains passages from the 'Athenæum' review of 'Devereux.' But then, the 'Athenæum' was less conspicuously associated with Scotchmen than almost any other organ of periodical criticism: and the articles which appeared in it upon the early novels are, in the main, more serious and less uncivil than the treatment they received in the monthly and quarterly reviews.

The probable cause of the discrepancy is that MacGrawler had to serve a second and more important end. The agency of just such a character was indispensable to the fundamental conception of the story; which requires that 'Little Paul,' in his forlorn childhood, should receive an education superior to its surroundings—an initiation of some sort into that ideal world which exists in literature to redress the balance of the real world.

No doubt he could have derived no benefit even from an instruction more comprehensive and refined than it was in the power of Mr. MacGrawler to impart, had he really been the offspring of parents belonging to a generation of thieves and prostitutes. But he is more than gently born. Before it trickled into the puddle where we first find it, the stream of the child's life had descended from no common height. His father was a man of exceptionally powerful intellect and commanding character, his mother a woman gifted with surpassing beauty of the most refined expression. Perhaps no part of this novel is conceived with a finer or a truer instinct than that which exhibits indirectly the almost inexhaustible power of hereditary tendencies to assert themselves when not absolutely stifled by outward circumstance.

Still, some humanising influence was indispensable to counteract the brutalising effect of degraded associates: and a

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preceptor had to be found for 'Little Paul' who, to the vices which rendered him a frequenter of the haunts of crime, added some acquaintance with the better kind of books. And I think it a further subtlety in the art of the story that the person who betrays Paul Clifford, and hands him over to punishment, should be the man who first unconsciously imparted to him the germs of those sentiments which throughout his career of crime are continually weaning him from it.

In his dedicatory epistle my father said of his attack upon the Scotch, 'I know what to expect in return, and shall scarcely be the one "who first cries, Hold, enough!"' But he had overshot his mark, and the Scotch Reviewers were unable to recognise a kinsman in Peter MacGrawler.

He himself was at that time a contributor to the 'Edinburgh Review;' and a letter to him from the Editor may be accepted as an indication that the clan took the matter lightly.

Macvey Napier to Edward Bulwer.

Edinburgh: September 7, 1830.

My dear Sir,—As I am uncertain whether you have been returned, as I think you expected, to the 'Honourable House,' I do not know whether we of the Land of Cakes are to have our northern obliquities held up to reprobation by a new and vigilant censor in that great assembly, or only to be scourged as heretofore through the medium of Messrs. Colburn and Bentley.

If the 'Honourable House' claims you as its own, and you are to bring in a bill to put down the unwarrantable Scotch monopoly of periodicals, it is to be hoped that you will give early notice of that militant purpose, in order that the wretches concerned may be enabled to look to the means of procuring their daily bread by other courses than those followed by their unfortunate and ill-used countryman, Mr. Peter MacGrawler.

I cannot guess what effect the following communication may have upon your views regarding the said land and its sons, but, as you are a friend to the inductive philosophy, you will at any rate be thankful, I am sure, for being put in possession of the facts. I have got something like a promise for a certain periodical of a favourable article on certain publications of yours by a *Scotchman*, while I have

also received two tenders of articles on the same publications, both by *Englishmen*, and both purporting unfavourable criticism. Now as I would wish, upon a principle of Scotch prudence, to keep well with you, lest I should come in for a share of the anti-Scotch scourge one day or another, I would be glad to be informed, being in just doubt upon this point, whether an unfavourable article by an Englishman is more worthy of acceptance than any of Scotch manufacture, however favourable.

The reference to 'the MacGrawler' is certainly good-humoured; and Mr. Napier appears to have been under an impression that it was also humorous, for he continues:—

I must come to an end and be serious. I hope you have not forgotten your promise to give me another article for the October number of the Review. If it is ready, be so good as to send it under cover to Messrs. Longman, Rees & Co., desiring them to forward it immediately.

Mr. Napier was continually writing letters to my father expressing approbation of his works; and the praise was always accompanied by excuses for the want of an adequate article upon them in the Review. The difficulties invariably got the better of his good intentions.

Before I dismiss Mr. MacGrawler, the strained connection of him in 'Paul Clifford' with the 'Athenæum' induces me to add a letter which my father wrote later to Mr. C. W. Dilke, the then proprietor of that journal, because it shows what a change a few years had effected in his mind, and how temperate were his views of criticism in 1837 compared with the heated impressions of 1830:—

Albany: January 14, 1837.

Dear Sir,—The frank and ingenuous manner in which you have dealt with me in your letter I venture to take as a personal compliment. I cannot enter into that Serbonian Bog, the kindly controversy between an author and a critic. To the end of time the man who writes will view things differently from the man who judges. You may be right. Perhaps I may be right. But we could scarcely convince each other.

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With respect to my supposed critic in the 'Athenæum,' your explanation suffices for all practical purposes. You have confidence in his integrity, and you consider him selected from the best class of critics you can find. I am willing at once to accept your experience as guarantee for him in both capacities. I do not think he expressed the opinion of the Public: but he expressed an opinion very general in the Press. I believe I have the Public with me. The Press I never had. This again trenches on the debatable land, and becomes one of those disputes which are only honourable to literature, and contribute to the life of its action so long as, in the present instance, the motives of the disputants are at least done justice to.

I have, &c.,

E. L. Bulwer.

My father must be reckoned among the few great novelists who, like Victor Hugo, have given the authority of their example to the introduction of *argot*, or the dialect of the very lowest classes of the urban population, into the dialogue of fictitious characters who would naturally use it in real life.

When 'Paul Clifford' appeared the experiment was novel, at least in English literature: and in his dedication he defended it on the grounds, *firstly* that what we call 'thieves' slang' is not simply a corruption of good language, but a distinct dialect, with much in it that is both philologically and philosophically interesting; *secondly* that provincial dialects had already been admitted into the higher order of fiction; and *thirdly* that their occasional employment is justified by their capacities as vehicles for humour, and that this particular dialect is replete with a latent irony specially adapting it for such a purpose.

There is no doubt much to be said on the other side. For my own part, I confess that the broad Scotch which fills so many pages of Scott's most charming fictions detracts from the pleasure with which I read them, and it can hardly fail to be a drag upon a story when any considerable part of it is not to be read without a glossary.

But I should be slow to deprecate the occasional use of *argot* in face of the happy idiosyncrasy given by it to such a character as 'Gavroche' and the lively local colouring it imparts to some of the scenes in 'Notre Dame.'

'With the completion of this work,' says my father in his preface to the edition of 1848, 'closed an era in the writer's self-education. From "Pelham" to "Paul Clifford" (four fictions all written at a very early age) the author rather observes than imagines—rather deals with the ordinary surface of human life than attempts, however humbly, to soar above it, or to dive beneath. Looking back, at this distance of years, I can see as clearly as if they were mapped before me the paths which led across the boundary of invention from "Paul Clifford" to "Eugene Aram." And, that last work done, no less clearly can I see where the first gleams from a fairer fancy rose upon my way, and rested on those more ideal images which I sought, with a feeble hand, to transfer to "The Pilgrims of the Rhine" and "The Last Days of Pompeii."'

Of the early series 'Paul Clifford' is undoubtedly the first in which we find conspicuous evidence of the dramatic power of the author's genius. The tragedy of the story is tremendous; and the skill with which the slightest incidents are made to contribute to the intensity of the *dénouement* has no parallel, and scarcely any promise, in the construction of 'The Disowned' and 'Devereux.'

'I have,' says the author in the curious epistle which serves for dedication, preface, and postscript to 'Paul Clifford,' 'endeavoured to take warning from the errors of my preceding works. Perhaps it will be found that in this the story is better conducted, and the interest more uniformly upheld, than in any of my other fictions. I have outlived the desire of the recluse to be didascalic, and have avoided essay-writing and digression. In a word, I have studied, more than in my two last works, to write a tolerably entertaining novel. I have admitted into it only one episode

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of any importance—the "History of Augustus Tomlinson." And this exception is only admitted because the history is no episode in the moral, or the general design, of the book, though it is episodical to the current of narration.'

The social and political satire sparkles lightly over a tragic background, sombre, profound, almost awful. Of the *dramatis personæ*, numerous and various as they are, the only one who plays his part with mechanical stiffness is Joseph Brandon, the brother of the terrible lawyer. In this artificial character the author had recourse to a device which he afterwards despised. 'It was a very cheap purchase of laughter,' he says in his 'Essay on Fiction,' 'and a mere trick of farce, which Shakespeare and Cervantes would have disdained, to invest a favourite humorist with some cant phrase which he cannot open his mouth without disgorging. The "Prodigious" of Dominie Sampson, the "My father the Bailie" of Nicol Jarvie, the "Provant" of Major Dalgetty, the "Déjeûner at Tillietudlem" of Lady Margaret Bellenden, &c., all belong to one source of humour, and that the shallowest and most hacknied.'

And to this 'trick of farce' also belonged the notion of making Joseph Brandon interlard almost every sentence with a parenthesis so contrived as to appear the absurd antecedent of the words which immediately follow it. To the same 'trick,' in 'The Disowned,' belonged Mr. Brown's incessant references to 'the late Lady Waddilove,' and the ever-recurring pun of Mr. Copperas on the 'Swallow Coach.' To this 'trick,' again in 'Devereux,' belonged Sir William's habit of commencing a capital story or jest and stopping just short of the point. The 'trick' has always the same vice,—that of making a single conceit or witticism serve some character throughout the entire work. The example of Scott enticed the youthful novelist into the imitation of a practice which, when a little older, he rightly condemned as a barren expedient.

All the remaining characters in 'Paul Clifford' (from

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Dame Margery Lobkins, the good-natured, hot-tempered, hostess of the Mug, with her unconscious worldly wisdom,[1] to Lord Mauleverer with his refined selfishness) are delineated with a delicacy and precision of touch unequalled in any of the previous novels.

But the master portrait of the whole is William Brandon the lawyer. Had my father never written another novel, this character would have remained the most powerful creation of his genius; and the scene which brings together, for the first time in their lives, the father and the son (the one as the criminal and the other as the judge) would have been his finest effort in tragic art.

The tragedy is softened without being weakened by its association with the charming image of Lucy Brandon. Of all the heroines of my father's *early* novels she is the most attractive. And I have reason for believing that on his embodiment of her gentle character he fondly bestowed the Christian name first associated by him with the love of woman: a name made musical to his boyhood as he sat in the Ealing meadows, among the wild flowers, by the waters of the Brent.

Godwin was so delighted with 'Paul Clifford' that im-

[1] Mrs. Lobkins' advice to little Paul. '"Mind thy Kittycism, child, reverence old age. Never steal, 'specially when any one be in the way. Never go snacks with them as be older than you,—'cause why? the older a cove be, the more he cares for his self, and the less for his partner. At twenty, we diddles the public—at forty, we diddles our cronies! Be modest, Paul, and stick to your sitivation in life. Go not with fine tobymen, who burn out like a candle wot has a thief in it,—all flare, and gone in a whiffy! Leave liquor to the age, who can't do without it. *Tape* often proves a halter; and there be no ruin like blue ruin! Read your Bible, and talk like a pious 'un. People goes more by your words than your actions. If you wants what is not your own, try and do without it; and if you cannot do without it, take it away by insinivation, and not bluster. They as swindles, does more and risks less than they as robs; and if you cheat,——and now go play." Paul seized his hat, but lingered; and the dame, guessing at the signification of the pause, drew forth, and placed in the boy's hand, the sum of five halfpence and one farthing. "There, boy," quoth she, and she stroked his head fondly when she spoke, "you does right not to play for nothing; it's loss of time; but play with those as be less as yoursel', an' then you can go for to beat 'em, if they says you go for to cheat!"' *Paul Clifford*, chap. ii.

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mediately after reading it he wrote to my father his warm eulogiums.

William Godwin to Edward Bulwer.

I have just finished my perusal of 'Paul Clifford.' I know that you are not so wrapped up in self-confidence as not to feel a real pleasure in the approbation of others; and I regard it as a duty not to withhold my approbation where I am morally certain that it will be received as it is intended.

There are parts of the book that I read with transport. There are many parts of it so divinely written that my first impulse was to throw my implements of writing into the fire, and to wish that I could consign all I have published in the province of fiction to the same pyre. But that would be a useless sacrifice; and, superior as I feel you to be in whatever kindles the finest emotions of the heart, I may yet preserve my place so far as relates to the mechanism of a story. This is but little, and does not justify my self-love; but I am capable of a sentiment that teaches me to rejoice in the triumphs of others, without subjecting me to the mean and painful drawback of envy. I am bound to add that the penetration and acuteness you display are not inferior to the delivery. I remain, my dear Sir,

Ever faithfully yours,

May 13, 1830. WILLIAM GODWIN.

Ebenezer Elliott, the Corn-law Poet, wrote in an equally enthusiastic strain from Sheffield.

Ebenezer Elliott to Edward Bulwer.

You have ruined me by writing 'Paul Clifford.' I can think of nothing else. Adieu Jeremy Bentham! Adieu all my old teachers, more solemn, but not wiser, and less inspired! I thought that dramatic wit had died with Shakespeare. The meeting between Brandon and his wife is Dantesque. But there are others who can paint such scenes. The dramatic power of the book is wonderful, but it is in its wit that I find its wisdom. Wit I think your forte; and of all things it is what I envy most. Perhaps because it never can be mine. Your 'Tomlinsoniana,' by the way, seem to have excited some righteous indignation here. In our library copy, numbers 1, 12, 13, 14, and 15, are much torn, and carefully glued

together again. I was sorely tempted to rip No. 23. Your social picture is too true.

May 25, 1830.

A passage in a letter he wrote a little later shows that the feelings to which my father gave expression in his portrait of MacGrawler were not confined to himself. 'It grates my gizzard to see these Scotch hirelings utterly unopposed, insulting all the good, and even decrying the very names of usefulness and honesty, whilst they are infecting our language with base terms and baseness. To overwhelm them and their patrons it is only necessary to quote their own lucubrations, provided it be done, as you have done it, in a light razor-edged way. This I could never do myself. I am only good for a scene to tear a cat in.'

Of the many prefatory outpourings which throw light upon the aims of my father's early novels, but have disappeared from the later editions of them, none is more characteristic than the rambling dedicatory letter to his old college friend Alexander Cockburn, that was printed with the first edition of 'Paul Clifford.'

Cockburn being now a rising barrister, his name was suppressed. 'It gives me pain, my dear * * * * * * * * *, to think that I may not grace my pages with your name: for I well know that, when after years shall have opened the fitting opportunity to your talents, that name will not be lightly held wherever honesty and truth, a capacity to devise what is good and a courage to execute it, are considered qualities worthy of esteem. But in your present pursuits it could scarcely serve you to be praised by a novelist, and named in the dedication to a novel. And your well-wishers would not be pleased to find you ostentatiously exhibiting a sanction to a book which they would fain hope you may never obtain the leisure to read.'

But this semi-anonymous character of the epistle relieved the author from all restraint in speaking of himself; and he

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writes with the freedom of a man who is talking to an intimate and sympathising friend. 'We are no longer,' he says, 'the rovers of the world, setting sail at our caprice and finding enterprise at our will. We have both learned that life has roads harder and more barren than we imagined. We look upon the ways along which we pass, not with the eager wandering glance of the tourist, but with the wary eye of the hacknied trafficker in the world's business. You are settled down to the honourable but exacting labours of the bar. I, "a mere spectator of other men's fortunes and adventures," am drawing from the bustle of the living world such quiet observation as, after it has lain a little in my own mind, I reproduce in these idle novels. Yet I cling not the less fondly to my old faith, that experience is the only investment which never fails to repay us tenfold what it costs; and that we cannot find safer guides through the mazes of life we have still not only to traverse but *retrace*, than the errors, the prejudices, the regrets, which at every interval we leave behind us on our way.'

He imagines that, on receiving the first copy of 'Paul Clifford,' his busy friend will exclaim with a *pish*, 'What a pity that * * * * * * is still writing nothing but novels!' And he asks himself a question, which he says he has often asked himself before, 'In writing something else should I really be writing something better?'

This leads him to review in a cursory way the general condition and aspects of English literature.

To the busy-minded energetic man who skims through a new novel are its three volumes really less attractive, less instructive, or less fatiguing, than the shortest new poem? 'Will you, will any one, read epic or sonnet, tale or satire, tragedy or epigram? Whatever be the variety, do you not except at once to the species?'

So much for Poetry. Philosophy comes next. 'Write on the mind? Speculate on the senses? Alas, to what

end? We may judge of the demand for moral philosophy from the fact that (in their collected form at least) the works of Hobbes are out of print, and Mill's "Analysis" has not even yet been reviewed. I will frankly confess to you that writing is not with me its own reward. In order to write, I must first have the hope of being read.'

Philosophy dismissed, what remains? Political Treatises, Essays, Travels, Biography, History? Treat these subjects as you will, does the biography, the essay, the political treatise, the history, outlast even the year commonly allotted to the life of the most shortlived novel? Its longevity is apparently not greater, its popularity is unquestionably less. 'The literary idler contents himself with some review of it in the "Quarterly;" and the dear familiar friend on whom you bestow a copy of it shuns you for the rest of your life for fear you should ask him his opinion of it.'

Is this the fault, not of the subjects, but the writers? No. '"Bracebridge Hall" is in every book club, "The Sketch Book" in every drawing-room, and both in high request. But the "Life of Columbus" (invaluable if only for the subject so felicitously chosen) and the "Wars of Granada" (scarcely less valuable for the subject so admirably adorned) are—the one slowly passing into oblivion, and the other slumbering with uncut leaves upon the shelf.'

Novels, then, have at least the best chance of being read. And if they are worth reading, they will be worth remembering. So that their immediate popularity need not necessarily be injurious to their permanent influence. And here follows a weighty passage which is even more applicable to the literature of the present day than to that of fifty years ago.

'We live in a strange and ominous period for literature. In books, as in other manufactures, the great aim seems to be abridgment of labour. People will only expend their time for immediate returns of knowledge: and the wholesome and fair profit—slow but permanent—they call tedious in letters and

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speculative in politics. This eager, yet slothful, habit of mind, now so general, has brought into notice an emigrant and motley class of literature—formerly little known, and less honoured, in our country. We throw aside our profound researches, and feast upon popular abridgments. We forsake the old march through elaborate histories, for a "dip" into entertaining memoirs. If from this, our present bias in literature, any class of writing has benefited more than another in popularity and estimation, it is the novel. Readers now look into fiction for facts, as Voltaire, in his witty philosophy, looked among facts for fiction. I do not say that the novel has increased in merit, or that it deserves its increased reputation. On the contrary, I think that, although our style may be less prolix than that of the last century, our thoughts are more languid, and our invention less racy.' [1]

No one, if judged by his own practice, had a better title to be the censor of an impatient age. 'Life,' he said, 'has hours enough for all but the idle: and for my own part, if I were not in the common habit of turning to more important subjects as a study, I should never have had the presumption to write even novels as a recreation.'

[1] Scott's novels he excepted as a matter 'of course' from this description.

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CONTINUANCE OF LITERARY AND COMMENCEMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY LIFE

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CHAPTER I.

LITERARY SUSCEPTIBILITIES. 1830–2. ÆT. 28-9.

BIOGRAPHY must deal with the life it records as a succession of parts: and events and traits, which recede into the background when the life is viewed as a whole, are for a while foreground features as each is told in turn. The real proportion is violated by the temporary prominence of circumstances that are small in relation to the rest; and the serenity of the image left at the close, when experience and discipline have had their mellowing effects, is superseded in the narrative by the turbulent picture of past passions and mistakes.

This reflection applies to the present chapter, in which I have to speak of my father's feelings and conduct in relation to criticism when his impatience of its abuses and injustice was at the highest pitch.

Authors and artists are reputed to be peculiarly sensitive: and it is sometimes true that the constitution of mind which could alone inspire their work is inseparable from a temperament acutely alive to sympathy on the one hand, and to censure on the other. But men of this kind are few; and the annoyance of authors at hostile criticism would rather seem to be the consequence of their circumstances than the special susceptibility of their dispositions.

Persons who never dreamt of printing a line would be as much mortified by the exposure in newspapers of their intellectual deficiencies, as are authors at caustic animadversions on their writings. Every one is familiar with the heartburn-

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ings created by words spoken only in private and reported to the subject of them by that pest of society 'the good-natured friend.' And, since man, literary or social, is always man, there is this further similarity in the effect harsh judgments have on him in either capacity—that, while, alike by those who speak and those who hear, they are forgotten almost as soon as uttered, the person they concern attaches to them an exaggerated importance, and allows himself to be haunted by the self-evoked spectre of a dead and buried criticism. There is no passion more universal than vanity, and none which can less endure to be crossed.

The distinction, then, between men of letters and other cultivated men is, not that they have, ordinarily, a nature more alive to censure, but that authors are more exposed to public criticism, and that in this fact they differ from those who are less pursued by it. The injury appears greater because the comments are more diffused.

The degree of sensibility, for instance, is as various among authors as it is among politicians. The interval between Johnson, proof against all abuse, and Goldsmith, morbidly sensitive to the least touch of it, was not less than that between the Duke of Wellington, caring nothing for attacks, and Canning and Peel, who never got hardened into indifference, whatever self-control they might exercise in public. Only, the irritation of the politician can vent itself in debate, and that of the author is apt to take the form of complaint.

The reviews of an author's books, multiplying with his fame, become legion when he is among the chief celebrities of the day. 'I have maintained the newspapers these many weeks,' said Johnson in 1766. The more popular a writer grows, the more his faults will be pointed out in connection with his merits; and detractors will increase, either from diversities of taste or from jealousy of his reputation.

With the propensity of mankind to sit upon their thorns, public favourites, if they are sensitive, nust necessarily suffer

most from critics: and this is seen in the precautionsy the often take to protect themselves from the annoyance.

In 1821 Lord Byron wrote to his publisher, Mr. Murray, the stipulations:—'That you send me no periodical works whatsoever—no Edinburgh, Quarterly, Monthly, nor any review, magazine, or newspaper, English or foreign, of any description. That you send me no opinions whatsoever, either good, bad, or indifferent, of yourself, or your friends, or others, concerning any work, or works, of mine, past, present, or to come. You will say "to what tends all this?" I will answer *that*; to keep my mind free, and unbiassed by all paltry and personal irritabilities of praise or censure—to let my genius take its natural direction, while my feelings are like the dead, who know nothing and feel nothing of all or aught that is said or done in their regard.'

Dickens, in the latter part of his life, followed Byron's practice, and gave up reading reviews of those works which tens of thousands read with delight, that he might not be disturbed by lectures on defects he had not the power to correct. George Eliot found that censure cramped her energies, and only read the sympathetic articles which were culled for her out of the mass. Others, whose nerves were stronger, have not the less been persuaded, in the fulness of their fame, that the press was against them. Thackeray is said, in his later time, to have been of this opinion. And it is among the penalties paid by authors of renown that, when they commence a progression towards the West, they are taunted with every decline from their meridian splendour.

Foremost among the sufferers from reviews, my father wrote an essay 'On the Spirit of True Criticism,' which was published in the 'New Monthly Magazine' of 1832. 'No science,' he said, 'requires such elaborate study as Criticism. It is the most analytical of our mental operations. To pause, to examine, to say *why* that passage is a sin against nature, or that plot a violation of art—to bring deep knowledge of

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life in all its guises, of the heart in all its mysteries, to bear upon a sentence of approval or disapprobation—to have cultivated the feeling of beauty till its sense of harmony has grown as fine as the ear of a musician, equally sensitive to discord or alive to new combinations; these are no light qualities. . . . But I doubt if a man can be a great critic who has not, at least, the elementary qualities of a good man. He must keep the intellectual sight clear from envy and malice, and personal dislikes. He must be on the alert to welcome genius. He must be not unwilling to learn something from the work he examines, and he must have deeply studied in other works all the principles of the art he illustrates. Where this largeness of mind is not visible there is always something petty and crippled in the judgment of the professional critic.'

A lady asked Madame de Staël to find a tutor for her son, who was to combine much the same moral and intellectual gifts that my father required in a critic; and Madame de Stael replied: 'Ma chère, si je trouve votre homme, je l'épouse.' A numerous profession must, in the main, consist of men who are not above average stature; and the bare recapitulation of the qualities essential to true criticism should render authors stoical, on the principle that we must endure the evils which cannot possibly be cured.

My father might probably have accepted this conclusion if his irritation had not been inflamed by the belief that the moral obliquities which are voluntary had more to do with the disparagement of his works than unavoidable incapacities; and this opinion was sanctioned by Macaulay in a letter he wrote my father, rebuking him, in language as reasonable as it was friendly, for having given vent to his dissatisfaction with his critics in a volume of verse published by him in 1842.

'If,' wrote Macaulay, 'I regret anything in the volume, it is that you should, in the last piece, have uttered, in language certainly very energetic and beautiful, complaints which I

really think are groundless. It has, perhaps, always been too much the habit of men of genius to attach more importance to detraction than to applause. A single hiss gives them more pain than the acclamations of a whole theatre can compensate. But surely, if you could see your own position as others see it, you have no reason to complain. How many men in literary history have, at your age, enjoyed half your reputation? Who that ever enjoyed half your reputation was secure from the attacks of envious dunces? And what harm, in the long run, did all the envy of all the dunces in the world ever do to any man of real merit? What writer's place in the estimation of mankind is ever fixed by any writings except his own? Who would, in our time, know that Dryden and Pope ever had a single enemy, if they had not themselves been so injudicious as to tell us so? You may rely on this, that there are very few authors living, and certainly not one of your detractors, who would not most gladly take all your literary vexations for the credit of having written your worst work. If, however, you really wish to be free from detraction, I can very easily put you in the way of being so. Bring out a succession of poems as bad as Mr. Robert Montgomery's "Luther," and of prose works in the style of Mr. Gleig's "Warren Hastings," and I will undertake that in a few years you shall have completely silenced malevolence. To think that you will ever silence it while you continue to write what is immediately reprinted at Philadelphia, Paris, and Brussels, would be absurd.'

My father did not think the envy confined to the dunces. His Trevelyan, in the 'Pilgrims of the Rhine,' when attributing to authors a peculiar temptation to 'the base vices of jealousy and the unwillingness to admire,' goes on to say: 'Goldsmith is forgotten in the presence of a puppet; he feels it, and is mean; he expresses it, and is ludicrous. It is well to say that great minds will not stoop to jealousy; in the greatest minds, it is most frequent. Few authors are ever

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so aware of the admiration they excite as to afford to be generous; and this melancholy truth revolts us with our own ambition. It was from a deep sentiment of the unrealness of literary fame, of dissatisfaction at the fruits it produced, of fear for the meanness it engendered, that I resigned betimes all love for its career; and if by the restless desire that haunts men who think much, to write ever, I should be urged hereafter to literature, I will sternly teach myself to persevere in the indifference to its fame.'

The many glaring and notorious instances of envy in celebrated men will not permit us to suppose that a great intellect is a preservative against the most paltry and ignoble of vices; but there are numerous examples of great men who have been wholly free from it. Walter Scott, the first among novelists in my father's early time, was one; and my father himself was another. I, at least, throughout the whole of our long and close intercourse, could never detect in him the smallest tendency to that exaggerated estimate of the dead, and undue depreciation of the living, which is the characteristic of literary jealousy.

Far from an 'unwillingness to admire,' his invariable habit was to seek for the merits in any new work by an unknown author. 'The effort,' he says in one of his political writings, 'to discover what is good and pleasant in the world around us is the mark of a manly virtue.' This 'manly virtue' he exercised largely in the endeavour to discover what is good and pleasant in the world of books. Even a single high quality appeared to him a title to gratitude not to be invalidated by a multitude of minor blemishes. There were some writers whose peculiar excellencies were not to his taste; and whom, for that reason, he appreciated less highly than I think they deserve. There were others whom he overrated from his sympathy with qualities of a rather humble kind. But, on the whole, I have never known any man more catholic in his relish for all the varied emanations of mind,

or more expert in rating them at their true value: and in no case did a moral vice distort his literary perceptions.

I have briefly noticed the feelings of other authors about the criticisms on their works, in order that it may be seen how much they had in common with my father. But his sensitiveness was in excess of what is usual; and from his circumstances the sensitiveness was tried to a degree which was not usual either.

Prominent among these circumstances was his shy retiring nature. This was one source of his preference of domestic and studious life to miscellaneous society; and his few very intimate friends and associates were not authors or critics. My mother, writing to Miss Greene in 1831 about some occasion when Moore, Washington Irving, 'young Disraeli,' the 'author of "Laurie Todd,"' and some other literary notabilities had been dining in Hertford Street, remarked to her friend, 'It is astonishing what bores I find all authors except my own husband, and he has nothing authorlike about him; for this reason, that his literary talents are but the least part of him.'

There is in all of us a happy tendency to be a little blind to the faults, and very kind to the virtues, of those we love, or for whom we entertain a feeling of personal regard. And, owing to this tendency, appreciative criticism is, more often than not, the result of a bias toward the author, either from personal knowledge of him, or from the report of friends, or from his previous reputation. These influences stimulate both the effort to understand, and the disposition to admire, him. In the absence of such motives criticism has a natural tendency to disparagement,—a tendency exclusive of envy.

My father has remarked that the critics of greatest fame have exercised their art in pointing out beauties, and not in exposing faults; for it is in the beauties that the world is permanently interested. But it is usually the disposition of a critic, when sitting in judgment on a contemporary for whom

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he has neither good nor ill will, to think that he elevates himself by assuming an air of superiority to his author; that to detect faults and errors is a greater evidence of perspicacity than to distinguish what is best and subtlest in the purpose and execution of the work; and that, at any rate, he is addressing himself to an audience which, on the whole, is more entertained by detraction than by praise. A critic trained in the school of my father's youthful period used to say, 'Give me a book to cut up; the public like anatomy.'

My father, by not belonging to any literary clique, did more than lose the good offices of the fraternity. The rarity of his appearance among them provoked the hatred of many, from their misapprehension of its cause. The offence is stated in an article upon his works, written in a generous spirit, and published in the 'London and Westminster Review' for 1843. 'Sir Edward Lytton is, we are informed,' says the reviewer, 'the younger son of a Norfolk family of good squirely repute. Now an impression has been derived, from what he has himself written, that he wishes to set himself above the literary brotherhood by intimating his possession of a squirely title to rank above them. His squirely equals see that he claims a superiority to *them* on the grounds of his literary eminence. He is in collision, therefore, with the spirit of both classes, and each attacks him as not being one of them.'

I am not aware that my father's writings anywhere indicate a desire to rank the son of the squire above the author. The title he most cherished was that which did not come to him by descent, but had been won for him by himself in the field of literature. But it is true that his shyness was mistaken for haughtiness, and his avoidance of literary coteries attributed to a contempt for the class.

He was earning his livelihood, as his defamers were earning theirs, by writing for the public, and they were offended at the pretension imputed to him of setting himself above them. All the while, he did but mingle in the circle to which

he had belonged from childhood; and even there he was, from his nature, more an actor than a spectator.

His political career, again, raised up enemies to him in his literary capacity. In his novels he avowed his liberal opinions. This might have attracted little notice if he had not gone into Parliament.

Half-a-century ago a practice had for many years prevailed with some leading journals of punishing an obnoxious politician, if he happened to be an author, by carping criticisms upon his books. The reviewer had no intention of forming or expressing a just estimate of the work: he merely used it for the purpose of lowering the writer.

Few suffered more from this cause than my father. And, as all the circumstances I have mentioned were simultaneously in operation to instigate cold, or captious, or virulent criticisms of his novels (criticisms in which the merits of the novels, even when allowed at all, were the things last looked for, and least noticed, by the critic), he was haunted by a resentful sense of systematic injustice.

One journal, 'Fraser's Magazine,' departing from criticism altogether, indulged in personal scurrilities which, in our more decorous days, can only be understood by a specimen. I take it from an article in the number of that Magazine for December 1831:—

'Do not be seduced into the belief that, because a man in your employer's back shop can manufacture a novel on the shortest notice, and at the lowest price, therefore all other species of literary labour may be similarly performed. Nobody knows better than yourself that to make a fashionable novel all that is required is a tolerable acquaintance with footmen and butlers. This will supply the high life. The meanness of the characters introduced you may draw from yourself. . . . Wishing to put a young man in your position in the right path, I have cast a hasty glance over the first magazine on which you have tried your hand, and am sorry to say it is

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truly beastly, and abominably stupid. . . . My dear Bulwer, this writing of yours is bitter bad, it is jejune base twaddle : twaddle, I say, Bulwer, twaddle. Your paltry grovelling productions have not the power of influencing the opinion of a lady's lapdog. Your politics are of the most sneaking kind. . . . If anybody thinks your talents worth hiring, why, like Colburn, they will hire them ; and if the force of idiotcy should so prevail in the land as to induce anybody to think you could be of service in Parliament, let him send you there as he would employ any other mechanic to do his appropriate work. . . . All this I have written in the purest affection. I think you a deserving young person whom Nature intended for a footman, and I pity you accordingly for having missed your vocation.'

His lampooners fancied he prided himself on his supercilious gentility, and they would shock it by calling him with mocking familiarity 'My dear Bulwer.' They thought he was vain of the society he kept, and they insinuated that he derived his knowledge of 'high life' from footmen and butlers. He was a hireling mechanic, to be had for wages by a publisher, or by people who needed a parliamentary tool. His character was mean : his politics sneaking : his productions beastly. It might well cause resentment in critics like these that my father should be a gentleman. The vanity which is a weakness or a vice may easily be confounded with the self-respect which is a virtue. My father's vanity could not be wounded by being told that his writings were 'base, paltry, grovelling twaddle;' but he thought himself insulted by personalities which violated all the decencies of life, and once or twice he retaliated. He should have treated such outrages with contempt. His replies could only gratify his assailants, and encourage them to continue their impudent vulgarities.

In 1838, when the future author of 'Vanity Fair' was twenty-seven years of age, but had not yet arrived at the

maturity of his powers, he was a regular contributor to 'Fraser's Magazine,' and in intimate relations with its editor. Adopting the custom of the journal, he made my father the theme for gross personalities, and, without being acquainted with him, drew a ludicrous picture of his manners and conversation: a picture which, beyond an extravagant caricature of one or two slight peculiarities, had no resemblance to his talk or his bearing in society. A man intellectually gifted could not have written in the style of the passage I have quoted from an earlier number of the Magazine; but, from my father's language in his Autobiography, I do not doubt his belief, at the time, that Thackeray was not guiltless of many of the scurrilities, all alike anonymous, which proceeded from the degraded dullards he condescended to abet.

For the sake of a writer whose genius adorned the literature of his country, I am glad to be able to state that he afterwards regretted his mistake in crossing the boundary which separates literary criticism from personal rudeness.

A common friend of Thackeray and my father wrote to the latter in 1861: 'I saw Thackeray at Folkestone. He spoke of you a great deal; and said he would have given worlds to have burnt some of his writings, especially some lampoons written in his youth. He wished so much to see you and express his contrition. His admiration, as expressed to me, was boundless; also his regret to have given vent to youthful jealousy, &c. I tell you all this, because I feel certain he meant me to repeat it.' This was followed by a letter from Thackeray himself.

Looking over some American reprints of my books, I find one containing a preface written by me when I was in New York; in which are the following words:—

'The careless papers written at an early period, and never seen since the printer's boy carried them away, are brought back and laid at the father's door, and he cannot, if he would, disown his own children.

'Why were some of these little brats brought out of their ob-

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scurity? I own to a feeling of anything but pleasure in reviewing some of these juvenile misshapen creatures, which the publisher has disinterred and resuscitated. There are two performances especially (among the critical and biographical works of the erudite Mr. Yellowplush) which I am very sorry to see reproduced: and I ask pardon of the author of "The Caxtons" for a lampoon which I know he himself has forgiven, and which I wish I could recall. I had never seen that eminent writer, but once in public, when this satire was penned, and I wonder at the recklessness of the young man who could fancy such satire was harmless jocularity, and never calculate that it might give pain,' κ. τ. λ.

I don't know whether you ever were made aware of this cry of 'Peccavi:' but, with the book in which it appears just fresh before me, I think it fair to write a line to acquaint you with the existence of such an apology; and to assure you of the author's repentance for the past, and the present sincere good will with which he is yours most faithfully,

W. M. Thackeray.

A few letters preserved by my father present his character, and that of his minor defamers in 'Fraser's Magazine,' under a last and instructive aspect. One of them is an appeal for charity, on the ground that my father's 'known magnanimity and generosity' will be irresistibly touched by the avowal that the writer, years before, was the reputable author of some of the 'severe criticisms' in the Magazine. The confidence was justified; for a second letter from the same person contains a grateful acknowledgment of assistance received.

A letter from Mr. Stebbing says: 'I cannot too strongly express my personal feelings of respect for the union of the many noble qualities which appear in your character. Genius is not always united with kindness and charity; and the promptness with which you have answered our appeal on behalf of poor —— and his family, has really given me pleasure in so many ways, that I trust you will pardon my using a professional privilege to speak thus plainly.' And on this letter my father notes: 'The person referred to was a poor wretch who had written some abusive stuff about me.

I forget what, but I believe it was something in "Fraser's Magazine."'

Later on, another of the lampooners solicited a small colonial appointment for a relation, and apparently obtained it. The individuals, perhaps, were penitent. But there is a general truth underlying the two states disclosed by these letters: and it is, that men of that class are equally ready to fawn or traduce, according as one or the other pays.

In the first period of my father's literary life, when the pens of many writers were against him, he retaliated fiercely on the Editor of the 'Quarterly Review.' He had been on friendly terms with Lockhart. But I find in Lady Blessington's letters to him allusions to ill-natured remarks made on him by Lockhart in private, and the expression of an opinion that the author of 'Adam Blair' resented the popularity of the author of 'Pelham,' or, at least, the personal interest felt in him by some female readers of his book.

Occasional sneers at faults in my father's novels began to appear in the 'Quarterly Review;' and my father, on his side, commented freely on the review in the 'New Monthly Magazine.'

At length, in an article on 'Zohrab the Hostage,' in the 'Quarterly Review' for December 1832, this forgotten piece of fiction, with not one single quality of genius, was pronounced 'the best novel that has appeared for several years, out of sight superior to all the rest of the recent brood,' and was held up to historical novelists as a model for their study and imitation, while my father's novels, from 'Pelham' to 'Paul Clifford,' were cited as contrasts, by their faults, to the masterly 'Zohrab.' There was not any pretence of fairness. The 'Pelham' series was only mentioned to be decried.

My father retorted in a scathing letter to Lockhart, signed 'The Author of Pelham' and published in the 'New Monthly Magazine.' It was filled with invective. Every sentence was an epigram, and every epigram a sarcasm; to which the criti-

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cisms of the 'Quarterly Review' were as vinegar and water to vitriol and fire.

I reject the suggestion that Lockhart was actuated by envy, either personal or literary. I have been told that the whole turn of his mind was sarcastic; that the lurking sneer could be detected in his singularly handsome, refined, and intellectual countenance; and that the habit grew out of a disposition too contemptuous of most things, and not from jealousy of any. In his addiction to jest and gibe he sported with much that he should have taken seriously; and I do not question that any biting remarks upon my father, or his novels, which he may have let fall in conversation, were simply part of his usual practice; and that the attack in the article on 'Zohrab,' though plainly spiteful, was only an incident in the petty warfare that had arisen between the 'Quarterly Review' and the 'New Monthly Magazine'—an incident in no wise related to the rival claims of 'Pelham' and 'Adam Blair,' nor arising, as Lady Blessington supposed, out of a personal rivalry between the authors of those books in the good graces of one or more of their fair acquaintances.

Some years afterwards, he and my father met accidentally at the house of a common friend; and, with a simultaneous impulse, they approached each other and shook hands. Both of them felt instinctively that the old quarrel had been the ebullition of an ephemeral passion; and, had they spoken their thoughts, they would probably have said, with a simultaneous unanimity, 'We are both in the wrong.' It is not likely that their amity was ever again disturbed: and the only letter from Lockhart among my father's papers concludes with the words, 'I feel exceedingly the generous courtesy of your procedure, and am gratefully as well as sincerely yours.'

I have now described my father's relation to his reviewers at this period of his life, and the causes which exposed him to more than his share of slighting comment and unlicensed abuse. I conclude with the passage from his essay 'On the

Spirit of True Criticism' in which he specifies the principles, or at least the practice, that had prevailed, when he wrote it, in the management of the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews.

His sweeping generalisations are only broad truths, which had many occasional exceptions. But the extract is worth giving for the acumen with which it discriminates the leading characteristics running through long rows of volumes, and for its clear indication of what he conceived to be the prevalent error—the lack of a catholic spirit, and an inadequate attention to the best literature of the time.

My father's essay appeared in April 1832, and the article on 'Zohrab the Hostage' in December. Though he spoke of Lockhart in the essay as 'a man of genius,' and said of a particular criticism, that 'the noble spirit (for it ought to be a noble spirit which produced "Adam Blair") is not visible in it,' we may safely infer that the estimate of my father's novels in December was the sequel to his own estimate of the 'Quarterly Review' in April.

'The elder Quarterly Reviews have done more to injure Criticism in this country than literary men have yet observed. People talk of the rise of "The Edinburgh" as a new æra in Criticism: and certainly the first numbers of that Review are exceedingly clever. They contain good squibs, excellent pamphlets, much wit, some philosophy, and not one particle of proper criticism. They did not introduce, but they consolidated and adorned, the pitiful system of reviewing a book by sneering at it. Criticism is analysis: with the "Edinburgh Review" it was irony.

'The writers of that day, moreover, were miserably deficient in true taste. They had not the smallest susceptibility to genius. They were Gallicised to the core: critical Hayleys —on a large scale I allow, but Hayleys still. They ridiculed Coleridge, they despised Wordsworth; they rarely praised anything *largely*, or predicted immortality to any work but the Oration of Sir J. Macintosh (a contributor) on the Trial of

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Peltier; and yet they seriously bent themselves to examine and confess the beauties to be found "in the splendid pages" of Dr. Darwin.

'They originated that vicious habit, now interwoven with our critical practice, of debasing the lofty guardianship of Literature into the truckling defence of a Party. They cut and squared their literary opinions to political purposes. They Whigged everything they touched. They gauged and docketed all the objects of Poetry—sun, moon, and stars, with the little excise notions of a faction that mistook snarling for philosophy. They were unutterably smart, clever, and small. They dwindled down all the genius they condescended to notice—they would have dwarfed Goliah himself. You never find them expanding with the lofty image, or aspiring with the sublime thought, they copied into their pages. They caught the Gulliver, and then played little tricks around him.

'As their blame, so their praise, minioned to their politics. Their heroes were borrowed from themselves. They reminded you of the Pigmies, who boasted (see Barnes's account of them) that Jove himself was a Pigmy.

'Yet these small critics became great writers when they left Criticism. Their political articles, though not large in spirit, were yet worthy of their present fame. They could not meet Poesy in her high and starred haunts, but they were excellent in attacking a game law, or quarrelling with a Ministry. They discovered and brought forward no new genius in our literature, but they were splendidly sarcastic upon some half-dozen old abuses in our Constitution.

'Seven years after the birth of "The Edinburgh," up started "The Quarterly:" and one might then have hoped that, instructed by the faults of its precursor, the new aspirant to critical authority would have caught at least something of the spirit of True Criticism.

'Not a bit of it! The battledore of "The Quarterly" was merely set up to play at shuttlecock with the battledore of

"The Edinburgh." "Rat!" goes "The Edinburgh," hitting hard at some Tory book. "Rat-tat!" goes "The Quarterly," with a mighty stroke at a Whig one. The same wonderful lack of penetration into genius, the same astonishing poverty of sympathy and admiration, reign equally in both. At its very birth, "The Quarterly" began to prattle of Burns like a fine gentleman praising the clever exciseman; and it thought "Waverley," on the whole, a very respectable work—for the class of literature to which it belongs.

'It must, however, be confessed that "The Quarterly" has committed itself to praise a little more indiscreetly than "The Edinburgh." It has predicted all sorts of immortality to Robert Southey and John Croker. It has spoken most handsomely of Mary Collings, a maid-servant, and John Somebody, a butler. From Mr. Lockhart himself,—a man of genius, and who seems by his life of Burns to have sympathies with genius,—a little of the *mens divinior* in reviewing might have been expected. But nowhere shall we look so vainly for anything resembling the true principles of criticism as in the present "Quarterly." Its last state is worse than its first. Were a foreigner, unacquainted with our literature, to open its pages, he would seek there in vain for any one of those names which are now in everyone's mouth. He would learn from "The Quarterly" nothing whatever about the authors whose thoughts and words are sinking into the heart of the age. He would open upon Croker's "Boswell" as the great book of the times; and the shrinking Muses of England would seem to him absorbed in the recent performance of Miss Fanny Kemble.'

The contemptuous introduction of Southey's name was unmerited by that admirable man of letters, who did not receive more encouragement than he deserved, though others got less: and his correspondence has since revealed that no one protested more strongly than he did against the carping criticism of the day. No man was readier than Southey to foster every indication of talent in all departments of litera-

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ture. 'The journal wants more of the *literæ humaniores*,' he wrote in 1825 to John Coleridge, who was editing for a brief period the 'Quarterly Review,' 'and in a humaner tone than it has been wont to observe.' This was his constant cry. But, being for many years the leading writer in the 'Quarterly Review,' he was commonly supposed to have an influence with its conductors which he did not possess, and to countenance faults which he abhorred.

If my father's sensitiveness to criticism was a weakness, no one was stronger in the self-reliance that rises superior to it. Lord Beaconsfield has described as terrible the blighting effects attendant on the doubt of possessing the mental power to accomplish the achievements which have become the dream of a life. No such doubts tormented my father. His feelings were feminine, but his will and intellect were robust; and he acquired fresh resolution from criticisms that would have disheartened a mind less vigorous and confident. Even his sensitiveness had, on this account, its compensations; and it is himself who says, 'He who most feels the peculiar pains, feels most the peculiar pleasures, of the poet. No matter what the silence of the world, his own heart is never silent: it whispers fame to the last. His statue is not in the market-place: for that very reason he expects the chaplet on his tomb.'

CHAPTER II.

THE 'VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.' 1831. ÆT. 28.

On some occasion when my father's thoughts were directed to the captious spirit pervading many of the articles upon his novels, it came into his mind to draw up what purported to be a contemporary review of the famous 'Vicar of Wakefield,' after the pattern of the criticisms on his own works.

The plan pursued by carping reviewers was simple. They passed over the qualities that captivate readers who give themselves up to their author, and singled out any features capable of affording them a pretext for cavil.

My father's *jeu d'esprit* was not intended for publication, and he left it incomplete. But the whole could not have served better than the part to show how readily a masterpiece may, by this method, be made to appear a medley of absurdities.

A new age speaks with scorn of the blundering criticisms of the past; and we plume ourselves on our disdain of the ridicule or neglect which awaited Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and Shelley, and Keats. But, as other authors arise who are pre-eminently original in the form and spirit of their works, our self-complacency is not found to have brought us nearer to infallibility, and only from a few, on its first appearance before the world, can genius commonly look for a flattering reception.

With the highest literature it is the *want* of familiarity that breeds contempt.

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Dr. Goldsmith as a Novelist.

The Vicar of Wakefield: A Novel. By Oliver Goldsmith. 1764.

Dr. Goldsmith is a writer not without some merit. His compilations deserve the praise of industry; and although, from their total want of philosophical arrangement and accurate research, they can never become authorities with the learned, nor even useful as books of reference for readers of maturer years, they have a certain ease of style which well adapts them to the comprehension of the young; so that, with the corrections of a careful preceptor, they may serve as elementary manuals for children between the age of eight and twelve.

Happy had it been for this writer if he had confined his ambition to the production of works thus harmless. For in these works, at least, the errors, however numerous, are not such as can seriously pervert the understanding or corrupt the heart; and their ignorance, though frequently displayed, entails no worse consequences than a smile at the self-conceit of the author, and a reference on the part of the youthful pupil to a few simple sources of information. We bear no ill-will to Dr. Goldsmith. Far from it. We should be too happy to leave him complacent and satisfied in the vocation suited to his abilities, and profitable, we presume, to his pecuniary interests. A sense of the duties we owe to the public alone compels us to expose the false sentimentality, the monstrous absurdities, and the pernicious moral of a book that, under the popular garb of fiction, might otherwise steal its poisonous way to the domestic hearth, to demoralise our sons and corrupt our daughters.

We shall endeavour to give an outline of the plot; if plot, indeed, it can be called, which presents to us nothing but an incongruous tissue of improbabilities, outraging common sense at every turn, and sinning against the most ordinary usages of society.

Dr. Goldsmith entitles his book 'The Vicar of Wakefield;' and in the opening chapter of it, he emulates the phraseology of an auctioneer in a puffing advertisement, to depict his hero and family living at Wakefield 'in an elegant house, situate in a fine country, and a good neighbourhood.' This first chapter is free from the grosser blemishes of those which follow it, and is not without a certain laboured attempt at playful simplicity which is occasionally felicitous. But the author's incredible ignorance of life in its commonest forms, though as yet only apparent in a trifle, prepares

us for what we may expect as his story develops itself. He makes his Vicar talk of the 'Family of Wakefield,' as if their name was Wakefield, not Primrose. We believe Dr. Goldsmith lives somewhere in Marylebone. Did he ever hear of the Rector of that parish, and his household, being styled 'the Family of Marylebone'? Who on earth except this Irish compiler would conceive that by the 'Family of Wakefield' could possibly be meant Dr. and Mrs. Primrose and their six children? or imagine that, like some nobleman, these people took their title from the place in which they chanced to reside? This clergyman, who is represented as a model of all Christian piety, thus describes the manner in which he thinks a pastor of the Church of England should pass his time:—

'We were generally awaked in the morning by music, and on fine days rode a hunting.[1] The hours between breakfast and dinner the ladies devoted to dress and study. They usually read a page, and then gazed at themselves in the glass; which, even philosophers must own, often presented the page of the greatest beauty. . . . When we had dined, to prevent the ladies leaving us, I generally ordered the table to be removed, and sometimes, with the music master's assistance, the girls would give us a very agreeable concert. Walking out, drinking tea, country dances, and forfeits filled the rest of the day.'

Such are Dr. Goldsmith's notions of the occupations of a Christian minister, and the proper mode of bringing up a youthful family. That his daughters should spend half the day in admiring themselves in the looking-glass this Vicar seems to think absolutely commendable, and an employment to be approved of even by philosophers. The Vicar himself, indeed, has one diversion somewhat more lofty, though we apprehend that his Bishop could scarcely have approved it. This is the construction of books, after the theories of Whiston (who is held up to us as a proper orthodox authority) on the sin of clergymen marrying twice. Certainly if all married clergymen led the life of the Vicar of Wakefield,—hunting, dancing, playing forfeits, and bringing up their daughters to study the looking-glass, one marriage would lead to wickedness enough in all conscience.

The Vicar has 14,000*l*., with which a merchant, in whose hands

[1] Much this scribbler can know about the rural pursuits he affects to describe! He talks of hunting as if it were an amusement all the year round. It is not exactly in the season for fine days that this Parish Priest could have stuck the fox's brush into his broad brim.

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it is lodged, runs away. Out of that sum only 400*l.* remains. Well, but the merchant cannot, we presume, run away with the Vicarage too. Whatever this exemplary pastor may have received from tithes in return for singing, dancing, romping, hunting on fine days, and writing books in favour of Mr. Whiston's heresies, must have remained unaffected by any freaks a merchant in town may have played with the rest of the Vicar's fortune. Yet, by way of economy, and in order to obtain some future means of supporting his family, the Vicar deserts his Vicarage and takes a small cure of 15*l.* a year in a distant neighbourhood! The next time Dr. Goldsmith goes to the Church for his hero he had better, perhaps, make some preliminary inquiries at the Ecclesiastical Courts, whether Vicarages are vacated because merchants in London run away.

This worthy clergyman now despatches his eldest son to town, where his abilities may contribute to the family support and his own,—assuring us that the young gentleman is possessed of integrity and honour. What Dr. Primrose's, or rather Dr. Goldsmith's, notions of integrity and honour may be, we shall see by-and-by when we find them exemplified in the career of Mr. George Primrose.

The family set out for the cure. They put up at a village inn by the way. Here they are informed that a strange gentleman who had been two days in the house wants money and cannot pay his reckoning. 'Wants money?' cries the host, 'that is impossible! It is no later than yesterday that he paid three guineas to our bridle to spare an old broken soldier who was to be whipped through the town for dog-stealing.' Dr. Primrose is instantly fired at the idea of this notable action—begs to be introduced to a stranger of so much charity—sees a gentleman about thirty—and at once offers him his purse. So, according to this new morality, dog-stealing is a highly praiseworthy proceeding, and three guineas spent in buying off the dog-stealer are worthily and nobly bestowed. Heaven defend our dog-kennels from Dr. Primrose and his friends!

With their new companion, Mr. Burchell, the Vicar and his family set out the next day. Mr. Burchell points out a very magnificent house, and tells them it belongs to Mr. Thornhill, a young gentleman who enjoys a large fortune, though entirely dependent on the will of his uncle, Sir William, who, content with a little himself, permits his nephew to enjoy the rest. Herewith the Vicar bursts into ecstasies at the virtue, generosity, and singularities of Sir William Thornhill. Mr. Burchell takes up the theme

with a glowing description of the very exalted character of that gentleman, whose only fault appears to be too exquisite a susceptibility to the griefs of others. And then he lets himself out in the following very artistical manner :—

'He now, therefore, found that such friends as benefits had gathered round him were little estimable—he now found that a man's own heart must ever be given to gain that of another—I now found that—that—I forget what I was going to observe, &c.'

The dullest imaginable reader is at once apprised by this slip of the tongue that Mr. Burchell is himself the great sublime he draws in Sir William Thornhill, and henceforth all possibility of interest in so transparent a mystery (although that mystery forms the pretended plot to the rest of the book) is utterly at an end. Dr. Primrose, however, though he expressly tells us that his attention was so much taken up by Mr. Burchell's account that he did not see his youngest daughter thrown from her horse and in the midst of a rapid stream, is duller than the dullest of Dr. Goldsmith's readers. He remains innocently unsuspicious of the identity of Burchell and the baronet, which that twofold gentleman has just so emphatically announced. Mr. Burchell fishes the young lady out of the torrent, after the approved fashion of romance writers, and then, after dining at the next inn, walks off.

Here the old gentleman falls pretty much into his old habits, and spends his evenings sitting in an arbour while the girls sing to the guitar. One day, while thus employed, . . .

The fragment goes no further : and I rather wonder that my father should not have cared to continue it, for many details in the sequel of Goldsmith's delightful and immortal tale afford a fertile theme for amusing comment in the style of conventional criticism ; especially those incidents which would be impossible unless everybody in the neighbourhood of his own property were unable to recognise Sir William Thornhill simply because he chooses to call himself Mr. Burchell. A fundamental condition of the plot which is itself an impossibility.

CHAPTER III.

PERSONAL AND FAMILY INCIDENTS. 1829–31. ÆT. 26–8.

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My father's relations with his mother increased in cordiality, and quickly resumed their old affectionate footing.

She had some difficulties with the Rector of Knebworth, which had driven her, in 1829, into the preliminaries of litigation, when she fortunately consulted her son; who, with considerable difficulty, succeeded in settling the dispute to her satisfaction. 'I do assure you, my dearest mother,' he wrote to her on the occasion, 'that nothing gives me such real happiness as to be of use to you, and on the most intimate terms of friendship and affection. Nor am I ever so vexed as when anything occurs that seems to prevent it.'

Not long afterwards, she again offered to renew the allowance which had been dropped since his marriage; and again he declined it. 'In your conduct to my wife,' he said, 'during this last twelvemonth you have been both kind and considerate. For this I am not ungrateful. But the harsh opinion you have expressed about her remains unretracted. To accept what from any one who entertains that opinion would be a "charity" on her behalf, were a baseness and a vice which, please God, I shall never commit. On consideration you will be convinced of the propriety of my conduct in this. It proceeds from a just principle. My affection for you not only remains the same, but you may now be assured of the true and unalloyed nature of it.'

So entirely in everything else did they separate their feel-

ings and conduct to each other from the one ground of offence, in which neither could yield, that when my father was necessitated to borrow money, he asked his mother for the loan of it; and when he began to repay it she requested him to retain it as a gift. But that would have been an encroachment on the principle which led him to reject the allowance: and, without reverting to the old difficulty, he insisted, for a second sufficient reason, on returning the money.

Edward Bulwer to his Mother.

London: February 11, 1830.

My dearest Mother,—I feel it difficult to express all I could wish, or indeed any part of it, respecting my debt to you, and your most kind liberality about it. But, my dearest and kindest mother, you must remember that what is lent is lent, and what is given is given.

I borrowed the money of you, and I must repay it. To let me do so by instalments is the most real kindness you can do me. Since, if you do not let me repay what you have lent me now, I should never again apply to you in any casualty or distress. With every most grateful and respectful feeling for your generous and delicate way of considering the matter, you must allow me, then, to believe that I can venture to depend upon your friendship at any subsequent period, by letting me pay at my own times, and in instalments, the whole amount of my present debt to you.

I assure you that what I have already paid in to your account I was able to afford with the greatest ease to myself. And, had it not been for what remains over of the rather heavy, but exceptional, expenses of first setting up house in town, I could have returned the whole without inconvenience.

Mrs. Leigh, Lord Byron's sister, called on us yesterday, and cried very much on seeing his miniature. She says it is the most like of any she ever saw. She is an altogether nice ladylike woman, though very ugly, and I think you would like her.

The unintermitting toil went on. It was often rendered more irksome by attacks of a severe form of nettle-rash, and by excruciating fits of the earache which distracted him at intervals throughout his life.

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To his literary labours he added, in 1831, the duties of an active member of Parliament. On the last day of April, at the general election in that year, he was returned for the borough of St. Ives.

In some respects he gained by an alteration he adopted in his mode of living at that time. He hired a small cottage at Pinner, where my mother and sister (the latter being then four years old) could have the benefit of country air, and live more cheaply than in Hertford Street. There he joined his family every Saturday, and remained with them till the following Tuesday. The arrangement was of great advantage to him in the exercise he got by riding to and fro; in the change from the loaded atmosphere of London; in the periodical escape from the turmoil of public life; and in freedom from the endless interruptions which interfered with his reading and writing in town.

But still his health suffered greatly from the strain upon a nervous system at all times delicate and irritable. In a letter written by him to my grandmother in 1830, just after his return with my mother from Newmarket, where they had been staying on a visit during the races, he says, 'We returned to town last night, and I have been in torment ever since with a fresh attack of this old nettle-rash.' Later in the same year he says, in reply to her enquiries, 'The pain in the ear was certainly intense while it lasted, but I am rid of it now, and about again.' And from these recurrent troubles he was not entirely relieved by the riding and the country air; for on July 1, 1831, he wrote from Hertford Street to his wife at Pinner, "Don't make yourself uneasy about me. I am better, and shall be with you at the end of the week as usual. If I have any relapse, I will send for you immediately. But I am in good hands. Davis is said to be very successful in cases related to my particular maladies. For which I am thankful; as I fear I shall suffer, should I live long enough, a good deal from similar complaints. They are hereditary in

my family. I have changed my medicine to-day, and already begin to feel the good effects of the change.'

As time went on, the labour my father imposed upon himself was rendered more and more burdensome by the bodily pain in which it was performed. The activity of his mind and life required a strong serviceable body; but it was ill calculated either to produce or to preserve what it required. Different physicians prescribed to him different remedies for the relief of sufferings which, though constant and acute, had their origin rather in nervous derangement than in organic disease. But all the remedies were more or less ineffectual; and their repeated failure induced him to study medicine for himself, with an avidity which must be more fully noticed by-and-by as one of the peculiarities of his later life.

The letter I have quoted in relation to the subject of his health at this time also contains mention of a project he had then under his consideration, of becoming editor of the 'New Monthly Magazine.' This magazine was the property of Mr. Colburn, the publisher of his novels; and Campbell had lately resigned the editorship of it, which was being conducted *ad interim* by Mr. S. C. Hall.

The letter mentions that Mr. Hall 'has just been here with a copy of "Fraser's Magazine" for this month, which ought, he thinks, to be taken notice of. This he offered to do himself, immediately, in the "N. M." It is a paper called "The Autobiography of Edward Lytton Bulwer." I need not add that it is virulent and abusive to excess, and a tissue of impudent falsehoods from beginning to end. But to me it seemed quite beneath notice, and I told him so. I am now accustomed to these things. To notice is only to encourage them. The unjust will remain unjust, and the filthy filthy, still. Moreover, if I take the editorship of the "N. M.," I shall be able, I hope, by and by, to set a tone (upon literary subjects, at least, and about literary men) that may gradually wean the public taste from all relish for these disgusting

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personalities, which are a disgrace to literature, and all concerned in it. But of this no more just now. The matter is still in abeyance, and it may be well to let it lie by till I have spoken in the House. For, if I speak tolerably well, any small parliamentary success will be favourable to the influence of the magazine under my management. Poor Hall, however, was very kind about it; and I am resolved, in any case, not to take the "N. M." without making arrangements by which he shall be a gainer instead of a loser.'

He finally accepted the office, with Mr. S. C. Hall for sub-editor, and the first number he superintended came out on November 1, 1831. I have already mentioned the circumstances in which he was afterwards provoked by the pertinacity and increasing outrageousness of the personalities in 'Fraser's Magazine' to break the sensible resolution about them recorded in this letter.

My father was reported to have said that he accepted the editorship of the 'New Monthly Magazine' 'to show that a gentleman might occupy such a position.' This is repeated in the article on his works in the 'London and Westminster Review,' and the writer adds, 'If true, the motive was most pitiful, and the affectation mournful, in a man of greatly gifted and truly generous nature.' But it was certainly not true. He never said anything so silly, and so entirely opposed to his own exalted estimate of the dignity of literature.

His views are expressed in his letter to my mother. There is not a word about showing that a gentleman might occupy the position. But, occupying the position, he meant to discharge his office like a gentleman, and in such a manner as to show that an organ of periodical criticism may be conducted in the spirit of a gentleman without being thereby rendered insipid. 'During his editorship,' says Mr. Gilfillan, in a criticism upon 'Zanoni,' which afterwards appeared in 'Tait's Magazine,' 'the "New Monthly" approached our ideal of a perfect magazine; combining, as it did, impartiality, variety, and power.'

His object in undertaking the task, though mainly literary, was partly political. He said, 'Any small parliamentary success would be favourable to the influence of the magazine;' and he intended that the magazine should react on his parliamentary success.

He did not owe his seat to the assistance of either of the two great parties in the State, for he was not a Whig, nor a Tory. Neither was he a thoroughgoing Radical. He was new to public life; and whatever celebrity he had acquired as a writer of popular novels was more likely to tell against him than for him. Without assistance from his previous reputation or from partisans, he had to make his way from the beginning: and as editor of a monthly journal in which he could give effective utterance to his views on public affairs, he had a better chance of displaying the fruits of his early studies, and proving his qualifications for serious statesmanship, than by trusting only to the opportunities of debate.

When my father became editor of the 'New Monthly Magazine,' my mother was expecting her second confinement. At the beginning of November she wrote to Mrs. Vanderstegen from Hertford Street, whither she had returned for the event, that she was ready to drown herself with vexation at the thought of it, and that she expected the child would be appropriately born on Guy Fawkes' day. The occurrence was got over, however, with less trouble than she expected. The child —a boy—was born on November 8, and on the 28th she wrote again to her friend:—'Many thanks for your kind congratulations, which I am sure you will repeat when I tell you that I was barely an hour and a half ill, notwithstanding all my croaking; and so well immediately afterwards that I could not believe I had a child till I saw it.' This child was christened Edward Robert.

CHAPTER IV.

ENTRY INTO PARLIAMENT. 1831. ÆT. 28.

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THE year 1830, when 'Paul Clifford' was published, is memorable as a year of great political excitement.

During the first twelve years of my father's life England had been occupied in the defence of her own shores and colonies, and in assisting the rescue of Europe from the despotism of Imperial France. During the next fifteen years the attention of the nation was absorbed, first in the painful discovery that the blessings of peace are not unmixed benefits, and subsequently in a discussion of domestic questions, stimulated by the cessation of foreign hostilities.

The war, while it lasted, had acted upon the agricultural and manufacturing production of the country like a system of protection more effectual than any which could be maintained in time of peace by the most exclusive fiscal policy. When the war was over, all classes and interests connected with productive industry suffered severely from the sudden loss of this artificial protection.

The later circumstances of her long struggle against Napoleon had excluded England from commercial intercourse with America as well as Europe, and left her almost entirely dependent for her food supply upon the produce of her own soil. The rent of land rose immensely under these conditions, but the prosperity was not confined to the owners. The farmer's profits were proportionally increased by the high prices

of his produce: and the demand for soldiers and sailors raised the wages by reducing the competition of the agricultural labourers.

The manufacturing interest had profited no less largely from these abnormal conditions. A vast amount of capital and industry was employed upon markets maintained by the war for the supply of the wants it created: and when the peace came, the manufacturing suffered even more than the agricultural population from the distress that came with it. The whole community (capitalists and labourers alike) had been living up to its income. Rents fell, wages fell. Labourers were thrown out of employment. Landlords and farmers were unable to meet their liabilities. Large manufacturing populations lost the markets which had hitherto supported them. Rich tradesmen were ruined. Debtors became insolvent, and creditors unable to realise their securities. Mercantile millionaires were reduced to bankruptcy.

This universal distress was aggravated by the Act passed in 1819 for the resumption of cash payments; a measure which altered the whole debtor and creditor account of the country, greatly to the disadvantage of the debtors.

The suffering of the agricultural community had received some mitigation from the protective Corn-law passed four years before (1815) by a large majority of both parties in Parliament: but that law was deeply resented by the manufacturing and mercantile classes. To the Corn-law of 1815 may be traced, I think, what has been, ever since, the greatest political weakness of this country: a separation (in opinion at least) of its commercial from its agricultural interests, and the alienation of the representatives of property in manufacture from the representatives of property in land.

Altogether, the social condition of England for the first few years of the peace of 1815 was wretched in the present and full of anxiety for the future. But time, the physician of circumstance, gradually healed it. Capital and industry,

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flowing into new channels, began to form fresh accumulations; and their revived activity was destined to find, not many years later, a powerful stimulus, wholly unforeseen, in the rise of railway enterprise.

Meanwhile, these fifteen years of peace were marked by a great fecundity in literature, accompanied by a diffusion of popular knowledge which enlarged the circle of lettered influence. This opening of what had hitherto been almost a sealed book to the masses was assisted by the application of steam, not only to locomotion, but to printing; and attention was diverted from foreign to domestic questions by a succession of vigorous writers. The collective tendency of the intellectual ferment was to strengthen in the public mind a vague desire for Parliamentary reform, and a disposition to seek in constitutional changes a panacea for the cure of every popular discomfort.

The remedial efficacy of reform had been preached in his telling language by William Cobbett; and in 1826 the 'Two-penny Register' was the staple literature of the labouring classes. Deeper and more sober thinkers had arrived at the same conclusion. An enlargement of the representative system was indirectly suggested, as the first condition of more scientific legislation, by Jeremy Bentham, and the school of political economists who followed him under the guidance of Ricardo and James Mill. So far as it went, the influence of such imaginative writers as Godwin and my father was also conducive to the growth of ideas which strengthened the desire for Parliamentary reform, and encouraged popular faith in the benefits to be expected from it.

Nevertheless, the demand for a Reform Bill might have been repeated year after year by speculative publicists and interested demagogues, without eliciting any active support from the great body of the English people, had it not received a fortuitous impetus from the domestic affairs of a foreign country.

The cry of Reform raised in 1831 was not the expression

of a want *definitely* felt, nor the result of an enthusiasm previously shared by any considerable portion of the community. From the end of 1803 to the beginning of 1830 not a single petition in its favour had been presented to Parliament from any part of the country, although throughout that period there were abundant petitions upon other subjects. The Whigs, to whom the question furnished a theoretical exercise-ground for the training of their Parliamentary troops, had tacitly abandoned it, after a few sham fights, when they associated themselves with Mr. Canning. During the earlier years of the Duke of Wellington's Administration, the continued hope of office still acted as a practical check upon their theoretical creed; and Lord Althorp then declared in the House of Commons that the people of England had become perfectly indifferent to the question, and he had no intention of ever again bringing it forward.[1]

The circumstances which in 1830 suddenly converted a relinquished watchword into a passionate demand are among the most striking illustrations of the influence of French events upon English politics. The 'great and stupendous question of Parliamentary reform,' as Pitt called it—the question which that all-powerful minister had declared to be 'nearest to his heart'—was indefinitely shelved by the French Revolution of 1793, and unexpectedly invested with irresistible activity by the French Revolution of 1830.

Not long before that event many things had contributed to put the country out of humour with the Wellington Administration, but none so much as the erroneous impressions of the Duke's foreign policy. Lord Aberdeen, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and his chief, were regarded, both at home and abroad, as the friends of the Holy Alliance; and, though Mr. Canning was dead, his bold and spirited foreign policy still lived in the approving recollections of his countrymen. What they supposed him to have suffered from the Duke's

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832.

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dislike of him, increased the resentment with which they regarded the presumed desertion by the Duke's Cabinet of Donna Maria di Gloria and the constitutional cause in Portugal.

In France, ever since his accession to the throne, Charles X. had been endeavouring to stultify the Charter of Louis XVIII. That charter represented the only liberties retained by a people who, for the sake of unlimited liberty, had soaked their country in blood, and irrevocably destroyed all its historical institutions. In the press, in the chambers, in the salons of the Chaussée d'Antin, in the clubs, and even in the shops of the Faubourg St.-Honoré, the Battle of the Charter was carried on by the French with all the wit and eloquence of a nation which was still one of the wittiest and most eloquent in the world.

This struggle attracted to the national party in France the sympathy of every Liberal in Europe. But by the people of our own country, whose constitutional liberties no sovereign had ever successfully opposed, it was watched with peculiar interest; not only because the cause in dispute was that of Parliamentary institutions menaced by arbitrary government, but because the English middle classes perceived that the fall of the Polignac Ministry would be the triumph of the middle classes in France, and thus, as it were, a vicarious victory gained by the interests of which they themselves were the representatives in England.

But when Prince Polignac was ambassador to the Court of St. James's, his relations with the Duke of Wellington's Government had been particularly cordial, and it was popularly supposed that he had been recommended by the Duke to Charles X. as the minister most capable of enforcing the policy of the 'Ordonnances.' English Liberals professed to fear that a *coup d'état* in France would be the signal for another in England; and from that moment the Liberal parties in both countries were as one. Their leaders corresponded with, and encouraged, each other.

The English Cabinet had discontented the Protestants, without satisfying the Catholics. It had alienated or disappointed many of its supporters without conciliating any of its opponents. Canningites, Radicals, Independent Liberals, Moderate Reformers, country squires whose old English love of liberty was revolted by the high-handed proceedings of the Ministère des Ordonnances, rich manufacturers whose new English love of power was stimulated by the gallant struggle of their order in France—all looked upon the cause of the opposition across the Channel as their own.

The Whigs saw, and seized with great ability, the opportunity to make themselves the mouthpiece of an all but universal sentiment. They nicknamed the Polignac Ministry 'The Wellington Administration in France;' and they skilfully concentrated all their powers of literary and social ridicule upon the 'reactionary' Cabinet which had removed Catholic disabilities, retrenched the public expenditure, improved the commercial legislation, reformed the criminal procedure, and created the metropolitan police, of the country.

In the autumn of this year 1830 the French monarchy fell with a crash which resounded throughout Europe; and the thousand discontents and sufferings, which had been till now inarticulate, simultaneously found passionate utterance in the cry for Parliamentary reform.

My father for the last two years, in contributions, chiefly anonymous, to the political press, had been actively urging the opinions he shared with the majority of his countrymen on reform and the foreign policy of Canning; and he was now bent on securing an opportunity of more openly supporting them in Parliament.

During the same year, his second brother, Henry, had come forward for the representation of Hertford in the Liberal interest. But finding, early in the course of his canvass, that he had no chance of being returned, and that by going to the poll he would only divide the Liberal vote, he withdrew from

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the contest, and immediately afterwards went abroad. During his absence, some offensive comments on these circumstances were made at an election dinner by Lord Glengall; and my father, on seeing the speech in the county newspaper, wrote and requested an explanation on behalf of his brother. A retractation was first promised, and then declined; upon which my uncle hastened back to England, and demanded from Lord Glengall satisfaction in the manner then customary amongst gentlemen. As, however, the imputation had been shown to be without any foundation, Lord Glengall was advised by the friend he consulted to withdraw it as publicly as it had been made.

Though this passing skirmish had no other result, it was indirectly prejudicial to the efforts my father was making to enter Parliament.

My grandmother was not a female politician. In the electoral contests of her county she did not concern herself. On this question, however, her sentiments were strong, and differed from those of her sons. This in itself was no great matter. But Henry's unsuccessful canvass of Hertford (a canvass begun without previous reference to her wishes) brought to her notice in her own immediate neighbourhood his unreserved advocacy of principles which startled and alarmed her. Nor was this all. The reports to which his abandonment of his canvass had given rise were extremely disagreeable to her, and she had been greatly annoyed by the dispute with Lord Glengall. All these circumstances increased the disinclination she had previously felt to assist the electioneering efforts of my father.

The Reform agitation was increasing daily; and he had received overtures from Penryn, which, however, he declined; not seeing much prospect of success in that direction. Shortly afterwards he was warmly pressed to stand for Southwark. The only person he consulted was Dr. Bowring, who urged him to open his canvass at once, and promised him his hearty support with the electors. On July 11 he wrote to Godwin:—

My dear Mr. Godwin,—You might reasonably believe me lost, so long is it since I had the pleasure of seeing you, had I not the excuse of those besetting avocations among which the still small voice of academic inquiry is little likely to be heard. In pursuance of the 'selfish system,' as it is commonly interpreted, I have been advocating my cause among some worthy gentlemen who have the power of choosing a member of the 'National Council;' and ever since, and indeed some time before, the death of the late King, I have been so engaged in this matter as to prevent my calling on you. I go into the country, and start in the course of the week for the place I am so anxious to represent. I trust I have your good wishes on this point, as on all others interesting to you; you are sure of mine. You will see me on my return. Believe me, my dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

Sunday, July 11, 1830. E. L. BULWER.

Godwin replied:—

July 14, 1830.

My dear Sir,—I need not tell you that I am much gratified that, when you have the concerns of the 'nation' on your hands, you can think of so humble an individual as myself. I write these lines at random, not knowing when they will reach you, but taking for granted you will receive them some time before the meeting of the next Parliament.

You say that you 'trust you have my good wishes in your present pursuit.' You have my good wishes, certainly, in everything that can conduce to your real welfare; but whether that is the true description of the thing you now announce is somewhat doubtful.

That, if you succeed, it will form a new bar against our familiar intercourse, I am willing to put out of the question. I told you, in our long conference, that I wished I had had the gratification of knowing you five years sooner. I might then have been of use to you—or, it may be, that what I should have intended for benefit, might have turned out for injury. But now your projects are formed you know what you elect, and what you desire, without a monitor, and I have only the precarious hold of you which depends on whether I can contribute to your pleasure.

But, waiving this, to go into Parliament is a serious thing. It must materially affect the colour of all your future life. If you succeed, you can never, in the same sense, be your own man again, and I have scarcely any materials to judge whether it will prove a

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good or an ill thing. I scarcely know anything about your political creed; I know less of what it is, being in Parliament, that you propose to effect. He that does nothing there does worse than nothing. It is like marrying a wife, or going into the Church, or being called to the Bar; it is for life. He that takes any one of these steps upon a mere cold calculation of profit and loss is so far degraded.

Excuse this presumption. If I am disposed to play the part of Minerva under the figure of Mentor, I know you are not disposed to enact the character of Telemachus. Your design is to launch your bark yourself, and to guide it by your own discretion. I have therefore only to wish you smooth seas, favouring gales, and a prosperous voyage. Hoping, therefore, that we shall meet again hereafter, I remain, dear Sir, very faithfully yours,

W. Godwin.

P.S.—I think in what I have written above I have expressed myself too coldly. I know that you have abilities of no ordinary magnitude. You have that enthusiasm without which great things can never be achieved. I ought therefore to anticipate that if you succeed in the first step the final result will be glorious.

Southwark was one of the many boroughs for which Lord John Russell had been put in nomination as a popular tribute to his services in the cause of Reform. It was understood that he would not represent the borough if elected. My father's letters, however, mention as his reason for retiring from the contest that, as a name so eminent had not yet been withdrawn, he was convinced that his canvass would be hopeless, as well as costly. He therefore closed it with the issue of an address, which elicited from Godwin the following characteristic letter.

William Godwin to Edward Bulwer.

September 10, 1830.

My dear Sir,—I remember a recorded speech of Lord Chatham, at the appointment of the Rockingham Administration in 1765, in which he says, 'Confidence is a plant of slow growth in aged bosoms.' Allow me to apply that maxim to myself.

I have known you but a short time. I knew you as the author

of 'Pelham,' a man of eminent talents, and devoted, as it seemed to me, to the habits of high life. I heard from your lips occasionally high sentiments of philosophy and philanthropy. I was to determine as I could which of these two features formed the basis of your character.

I now avow myself your convert. Your advertisement in this morning's paper is a pledge for your future character ; you have passed the Rubicon ; you must go forward, or you must go back for ever disgraced. I know your abilities; and I therefore augur a career of rectitude and honour.

With respect to the acquaintance I shall have with you, I can dispense with that. If in these portentous times you engage yourself with your powers of mind for the real interests of mankind, that is everything. I am but the dust of the balance.

And yet—shall I own ?—the slowness you manifested in cultivating my acquaintance was one of the circumstances that weighed with me to your disadvantage. But I am nothing. Run the race you chalk out for yourself in this paper of yours, and I am more than satisfied.

Allow me, however, to add here something in allusion to our last conversation. It must be of the highest importance to an eminent character which side he embraces in the great question of self-love and benevolence. I tolerate, and talk and think with much good humour towards, the man who embraces the wrong side here, as I tolerate a Calvinist or a Jew ; but in the public cause he labours with a millstone about his neck—no, not exactly that ; but he is like a swimmer who has the use only of his left hand. Inexpressibly must he be disadvantaged in the career of virtue who adheres to a creed which tells him, if there be meaning in words, that there is no such thing as virtue.

I am desirous to have the advantage of your judgment and advice upon a particular point, but that can wait.

To this letter my father replied from Bognor :—

Edward Bulwer to William Godwin.

Bognor, Sussex : September 17, 1830.

My dear Sir,—I am greatly obliged and pleased by your letter, and I am unexpectedly rejoiced that my address to the people of Southwark should produce one effect– an increase of your good

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opinion. You surprise and grieve me, however, by thinking so ill of my judgment as to imagine me slow in seeking your acquaintance. The fact is that you a little misconceive my character. I am in ordinary life very reserved, and so domiciliated a person, that to court anyone's good opinion as I have done yours is an event in my usual quietude of habit.

With respect to the utilitarian, not 'self-love,' system of morals, all I can say is, that I am convinced that, if I commit a blunder, it is in words not things. I understand by the system that benevolence may be made a passion; that it is the rule and square of all morality; that virtue loses not one atom of its value, or one charm from its loveliness; if I err, I repeat it is in words only. But my doctrine is not very bigotedly embraced, and your essay has in two points let in a little scepticism through a rent in my devotion.

My advice, or rather opinion, such as it may be, is always most heartily at your service, and you will flatter and gratify me by any desire for it.

I am living here very quietly; and what doing, think you? Writing poetry. After that, it may be superfluous to tell you that Bognor is much resorted to by insane people.

Ever and most truly yours,

E. Lytton Bulwer.

He at the same time wrote to Dr. Bowring:—

Bognor: September 17, 1830.

Dear Bowring,—You perceive by the 'Times' that I have for the present withdrawn from Southwark. The fact is that the appearance of any man not a public character, possessing Liberal opinions, only seems to me to split and distract the independent interest. A man of great political reputation might concentrate and engross it; but I have the first steps to climb. I am very glad, however, that I examined the field, for it has not only led to a foundation which may be worth building on hereafter, but has given me those recollections so peculiarly pleasurable, namely, recollections of personal kindness. Among these I shall carefully hoard the remembrance of your trouble and good-nature on my behalf.

Believe me, very truly yours,

E. L. Bulwer.

Shortly afterwards, my father and mother went into Norfolk, on a visit to my eldest uncle, William Bulwer, at Heydon.

In the meanwhile, revolution in France had been followed by revolution in Belgium; and my uncle Henry had been entrusted by Lord Aberdeen with a secret mission to that country for the purpose of watching (and confidentially reporting, from a point of view practically inaccessible to our official representatives at Brussels) the progress and prospects of the Belgian revolution.

When the Provisional Government was formed by the leaders of the successful national movement in Belgium, it despatched Monsieur Van de Weyer to this country with instructions to solicit English intervention on its behalf; and in the month of November 1830 he came to England, bringing with him a letter of introduction from my uncle to my father, who was then at Heydon. A letter written by him from thence to Dr. Bowring, in explanation of his inability to meet Monsieur Van de Weyer in town, bears witness to the restless condition of the country.

In the previous year, 1829, serious disturbances had broken out in the manufacturing districts. At Macclesfield, Huddersfield, Coventry, Nuneaton, Bedworth, Barnsley, and many other important seats of industry, strikes had occurred on a then unprecedented scale, and riots which compelled the authorities to call out the troops for the suppression of what was described as 'a reign of terror.' In these commotions the houses of unpopular manufacturers had been attacked, pillaged, and fired by the mob. In the present year, 1830, the disturbance of the labouring population spread to the agricultural counties.

There had been no fall in wages, no diminution in the demand for labour, no rise in the rate of interest on money, to account for disorders, which were officially ascribed to a political, and probably foreign, conspiracy.[1] The discontent was

[1] Mr. Roebuck, in his history of the Whig Administration of 1830, also adopts this explanation, and observes —'Looking back to those times, our

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more probably the product of an excitement that generated vague wild hopes of changes which would for ever 'scatter plenty o'er a smiling land.'

Mr. Bulwer to Dr. Bowring.

Heydon Hall, Aylsham, Norfolk: November 12, 1830.

My dear Bowring,—I have received a letter from my brother at Brussels, mentioning a Monsieur Van de Weyer,[1] to whom he had given a letter introducing him to me. Unfortunately I am at some considerable distance from London, and not likely for some weeks to visit 'the great City.' But as my brother mentions you in his letter, and says that you will give me some explanation of M. Van de Weyer's business, I trouble you with a line, merely to say, that if anything occurs to you in which, at this distance from town, I can be useful, I shall be very happy, and you can convey to M. Van de Weyer my regret at being from home.

I suppose you are enjoying yourself in the surrounding hubbub of London, 'riding on the whirlwind, and directing the storm.' For me, at this distance from the roar of events, I am at a loss to know whether our thanks for considerable excitement are due to patriots or to pickpockets: at all events, it were well if they would drop the suspicious cry of 'No police,' and the disgraceful habit of throwing stones at old gentlemen on horseback.

As for the tricolour, 'tis a pity that sentiments really free cannot be acquired as easily as the colour of a ribbon may be assumed. The march of conflagration has extended hitherwards. Last night we were treated with the sight of a burning haystack. We understand that this new periodical is to be carried on every other night with considerable spirit. Adieu, my dear Bowring.

Yours, with great truth,

E. L. Bulwer.

wonder is indeed excited by finding party spirit attributing these proceedings of an ignorant peasantry to their discontent at the continuance of the Tory Administration in office, and the conduct of Parliament respecting the Civil List. These poor creatures had probably never heard the words "Civil List," and certainly never understood their meaning if they did hear them.'—Roebuck's *History of the Whig Administration of* 1830, p. 336.

[1] My father says of him: 'Van de Weyer had precisely those qualities which ensure success and rarely achieve fame.'

These agricultural disturbances were not allayed by the folly of some of the local magistrates, who encouraged the labourers to believe that the general rate of wages might be raised in accordance with their demands. The agitation continued; and a more detailed description of the form it assumed in Norfolk is given by my mother in the following letter, written also from Heydon, a month later, to Mrs. Vanderstegen:—

Mrs. Bulwer to Mrs. Vanderstegen.

Heydon: December 5, 1830.

I am truly grieved to hear such bad accounts of Berkshire, but I hope that you and yours individually have not suffered any loss or fright, and that the bad reports are altogether much exaggerated.

This part of the country, like every other, has been in a terrible state of disturbance. Meetings of five or six hundred desperadoes in every village. About ten days ago there was a meeting of this sort at a place called Reepham, which all the noblemen and gentlemen in the county went to try and put down, by telling the people that their wrongs should be redressed, their wages raised, and employment given to them. Upon which the mob shouted, 'It is very well to try and talk us over, but we will have blood for our suppers!' They then began pelting the magistrates and gentlemen with large stones. Edward lost his hat, and came home with his head tied up in a handkerchief, which gave rise to a report that his brother was much hurt; but this, like most other reports, was totally false.

The other day, as we were returning from Lord Orford's, on our way to Sir Jacob Astley's, we heard that Melton (his place) was burnt to the ground, but on our arrival we found this was false. During the week he was there everything was tolerably quiet, but since then there has been a terrible riot, and Sir Jacob was obliged to send for a troop of cavalry from Norwich, who have been there ever since.

If London were but in half the disturbed state that every county in England is, the country might be fairly pronounced in a state of actual revolution. The burnings are dreadful, but every house in this part of the world is in a state of defence, and all the farmers, shopkeepers, servants, &c. &c., sworn in special constables.

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All the popular fury is now directed against the clergy on account of the highness of the tithes, which they obstinately persevere in not lowering, although the landlords have lowered their rents, and the farmers have raised their wages.

Yours, &c.,

R. Lytton Bulwer.

Thus, amidst general discontent and disturbance, the year 1830 came to an end, without bringing to my father any fulfilment of his increasing wish for a seat in Parliament.

But in the following year there was a general election which will long be memorable in the history of this country. That election was preceded by a scene in both Houses of Parliament so dramatic that, even at this distance of time from the fears and hopes which experience has proved to be exaggerated, it is impossible to read the bald record in the unemotional pages of 'Hansard' without catching some of the excitement exhibited by those who took part in it.

All over the country this excitement was now intense. Reform unions and associations were everywhere organised. The Liberal press surpassed itself in the language of personal menace, detraction, and vituperation. The noblest characters, the most exemplary lives, the finest intellects, and the greatest public services, failed to shelter from its aspersions those who had the courage to express opinions adverse to the popular demand.

The mob became the executor of the denunciations pronounced by the press. In London it was contented with smashing the windows of the Duke of Wellington, Mr. Baring, and other anti-Reformers. But in Ireland the Reformers, in their enthusiasm for that kind of liberty, always popular, which consists of savage assaults upon the characters, properties, and lives of political opponents, were not slow to act upon the advice given them by the 'Times,' 'to plaster the enemies of the people with mud, and duck them in horse-ponds.' In England some persons were killed, and several

severely wounded, in the attempt to vote for anti-Reform candidates. In Scotland a murderous assault was made upon the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and the dying Sir Walter Scott was hooted by the Liberal ruffians of Jedburgh.[1]

Every man and woman, nay every boy and girl, in England, who wanted something, confidently expected to get it from the Reform Bill. 'All young ladies,' said Sydney Smith, 'expect that, as soon as this bill is carried, they will be instantly married; schoolboys believe that gerunds and supines will be abolished, and that currant tarts must ultimately come down in price; the corporal and sergeant are sure of double pay; bad poets expect a demand for their epics; and fools will be disappointed, as they always are.'

An amusing instance of the intoxicating effects of this popular credulity is described in the following letter:—

Mrs. Bulwer to Miss Greene.

Broadstairs: June 26, 1831.

The infatuation of the common people all over the country about this Reform Bill is astonishing. They seem to look on it as a sort of patent steam-engine miracle-worker. The other evening, a ragged fellow who was crying out the King's speech, announced it with the following appendages: 'Good news for the poor! Great and glorious speech of His Most Gracious Majesty William the Fourth! The Reform Bill will pass. Then you'll have your beef and mutton for a penny a pound. And then you'll all be as fine as peacocks for a mere trifle. To say nothing of ale at a penny a quart. In which you may drink His Majesty's health, and His Majesty's Ministers' health, and the glorious Reform Bill's health, all without a ruining of yourselves!'

I opened the window the better to hear this piece of oratory, when my beloved little Blenheim set up a furious barking at the man, and I could not make him be quiet. 'Lor' bless his sweet pretty face,' said the street Cicero, 'he won't do no hurt. He be like them there Tories as makes a big blusterin' row, thinking to

[1] 'I care for you,' he said, 'no more than for the hissing of geese.'—Alison, *Hist.* vol. iv. chap. xxiii.

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frighten the People. 'Cause why? 'Cause they be mortal afeared of the People themselves. But Lor' love ye, when we gets this here Reform Bill through the Hupper Ouse, maybe we'll have a reform among the dogs likewise, and they'll *all* be like that pretty red and white black-eyed cretur.'

All the common people are now persuaded that the Reform Bill will feed and clothe them for nothing. Poor geese!

In this general election Scotland returned a majority of two-thirds against the Bill. In Ireland the hostility to the existing constitution had become so universal, that the Bill, which promised the destruction of it, received from that part of the United Kingdom the passionate support of Protestants and Catholics combined. A significant historical comment on the Catholic Relief Bill. Throughout England the constituencies, rural as well as urban, were almost unanimously in favour of the Bill, and of eighty-two members elected by the counties only six were anti-Reformers.

My father had now another opportunity of finding his way into Parliament. He had received from St. Albans promises of support which rendered his election for that borough both certain and inexpensive. But St. Albans was in Hertfordshire, not far distant from Knebworth; and he felt very doubtful whether it would not be disagreeable to his mother to see another of her sons soliciting as a Reform candidate the suffrages of a borough so near her own abode. He therefore wrote to her on March 8, 1831:—

'Will you allow me now, though I do it with great reluctance, to call your attention to a matter of considerable importance to me? It is this. I am naturally and reasonably anxious to enter Parliament. I have seen men of my own standing at Cambridge—men not more distinguished than myself—put forward by their relations and friends, and by them returned to Parliament. No such pains having been exerted on my behalf, I have, alone and unaided, tried every place where there was any chance of success. I have never been im-

prudent, even in my experiments. Finding the chances against me at Penryn, I did not stand. Finding that the expenses would be heavy at Southwark, I declined that place also. I may so far lay claim to common sense and discretion even in pursuing what I have most at heart. Not having allowed myself to be misled by misrepresentation or my own rashness, if I stand for any place it will only be with the fullest and fairest probability of success at a moderate expense.

'Now I grieve to say—lest you should dislike it—that the only place deserving this character is St. Albans. This is the only town in which I could at once obtain a triumphant support, and in which, from the respectability of my supporters, I could be sure about my expenses. If I do not accept this offer, there is no other place where I can come in, and consequently all hope of entering Parliament must be abandoned.

'If you object, owing to the vicinity to Knebworth, I will engage that you shall have no trouble from that cause, and I think you may trust, from my discretion, that the harassment you had about Hertford will not be repeated in my case. Still, if on this or any other ground relating solely to yourself, you do object, I will at once give up the idea.'

She did object, but partly on grounds relating more to him than to herself. 'These,' he said in reply, 'would not hold in my case. I had ascertained all that, before I wrote to you. But it is enough that the measure is unpleasant to your feelings. I relinquish it at once, and with the greatest cheerfulness. Any vexation I may have felt for a moment in relinquishing it is more than a thousand times compensated to me by the pleasure I feel in acting according to your wishes. My rash is really better. The worst of it is that the disorder is so capricious. A little more exercise, or a little more harassment, than usual makes it break out with redoubled violence. There is no danger in such a complaint,

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not the least cause for alarm or anxiety. Only, perpetual pain and fever is no trifle if it becomes incurable.'

The prospect resigned at St. Albans was soon renewed elsewhere, and at the end of April he says in a letter to his mother: 'I write in *very great* haste, to beg a *very great* favour. I am just about to leave town for St. Ives. My election is certain. Will you in this case help me out with the expenses by lending me any sum you conveniently can, from 500*l.* to 1,000*l.*? I will fully and faithfully repay it in less than a year.'

The loan was at once accorded, but not without an expression of his mother's misgivings about his style of living and the increased expenditure he seemed to be courting by this eagerness to get into Parliament. To this he replied: 'Your very kind loan is fortunately not required. When I wrote I was worried by the shortness of the time. But I am none the less cordially obliged to you, and I perfectly understand your scruples. I set off now in two or three hours by the mail. You are mistaken, my dearest mother, in thinking that I have overlived my income. That I have paid for a house, that I have furnished it, and that I have also paid for a year's seat in Parliament, without being in debt, except to yourself, for what you have so kindly lent me, are clear proofs, which may satisfy you that I have not outlived my income. On the contrary, I have saved from my income and invested the savings. Of course in the word income I include what I annually receive from my books, which are to me what rental is to others. Your kindness has now enabled me to make writing no longer the heavy toil it has been, and I shall do what, in your generosity, you meant me to do—slacken work, and attend more to my health. God bless you, dearest mother! P.S.—With regard to Mr. ——, I see no reason, so far as regards my brother or myself, why you should not express any sentiments you entertain. My return is now beyond the reach of injury, and Henry's will be so

before such a circumstance could travel to Coventry. But I see great reason why, for your own sake, you should not actively oppose the reform. The people are so unanimous and so violent on the measure, right or wrong, that I do not hesitate to say that persons who oppose it will be marked out in case of any disturbance. I might give many other reasons; but I think this sufficient for anyone in your position, who regards life and property in very critical times: and I would not, were I you, allow Mr. ——, or anyone else, to make the smallest use of your name.'

On May 1, 1831, my mother wrote to Mrs. Vanderstegen :— 'Mr. Bulwer is gone to St. Ives, for which place he stands. They say he is sure of coming in; but I never believe anything to be sure about an election till it is over. His brother Henry is also getting on well at Coventry.' And on the following day she reopened her letter to add to it this postscript: 'Monday, May 2.—I have just got Mr. Bulwer's first frank. He is returned for St. Ives.'

On April 30, my father had already written to his mother :—

My dearest Mother,—I write to you forthwith. I am returned to Parliament this day and hour. Post waits. This is my first frank.

Yours most affectionately,

E. B. L.

CHAPTER V.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI. 1829–31. ÆT. 26–8.

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My father's parliamentary career, and the details of his editorship of the 'New Monthly Magazine,' as well as the greater number of his more intimate personal acquaintances in political and literary society, belong to a part of his life which lies beyond the limits of the present volumes. Of the memorable events, however, which had their commencement in the period I am now dealing with, one still remains to be told—his friendship with the illustrious statesman whose name stands at the head of this chapter.

The spring of 1829 is the earliest date to which I can trace an acquaintance that must have grown out of a previous exchange of letters upon literary subjects with the elder Disraeli; whose works had greatly charmed my father when at college.

What may have been the origin of his correspondence with Isaac Disraeli I cannot say. It was probably initiated by himself, under the influence of those feelings which so often impel enthusiastic young readers to address living writers whose books have made a strong impression on their minds. I have no record of my father's share in this correspondence. But from the replies to his letters I gather that among the earliest subjects of it were the character of Cardinal Mazarin and the works of Thomas Fuller.

Some years later, Mr. Disraeli's eyesight, long overtaxed, failed him prematurely; and partial blindness prevented his

completing an extensive survey of English literature, for which all his previous works and studies had been a long preparation.

Of this broken project 'The Amenities of Literature' was a fragment: and, in sending to my father an early copy of that work, he wrote—'I thank you for your friendly sympathy. I remain in darkness, and I regret to say that my philosophy does not equal my misfortune. These volumes are broken bits from the beginnings of my long projected literary history. I grieve to have fallen from my horse in the ardour of the pursuit.'

In one of his manuscript notes my father has jotted down what he conceived to be the characteristic merits in the writings of the elder Disraeli. 'He was a fine type of the habitual student. His reading was very extensive in his own departments; and he made it popular by a certain charm of style which (to my taste) has much classical sweetness, and often a pleasantry that amounts to humour. I visited him often at Bradenham, when his son and I were young men.'

Of Isaac Disraeli's opinion of my father's powers at this period of his youthful authorship there is a slight indication in what he wrote of 'Paul Clifford' shortly after it appeared. 'You have stamped with a new character the novel and the romance, by opening fresh and untasted springs; and I am confident that, with your fertility of invention, you may vary, without exhausting, the nature and the art you command.'

The first lines addressed by my father to the younger Disraeli were a formal acknowledgment of the receipt of some books. This acknowledgment was answered by a grateful note, and a gift of Turkish tobacco: the only pipe-tobacco my father ever smoked. The note and the gift called forth a second letter to the donor.

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Edward Bulwer to Benjamin Disraeli.

Brookes's Club: February 19, 1829.

Sir,—I beg you to accept my best thanks for your very obliging note, and for the delicate and flattering attention you have been pleased to pay me in the gift which accompanied it.

Things of that sort have a great value to the author: and the value is—his power of burning them.

I am very sorry that any cause, much more one arising from ill health, should diminish the probability of my thanking you personally, and of expressing, in the same way, my great admiration of the only works attributed to you which I have ever read, viz., 'Vivian Grey' and 'Captain Popanilla.'

As these cannot come under the head of 'juvenile indiscretions,'[1] I know not to what other works you allude. But I shall be happy in any way to repay your attention to me.

Allow me to make you many apologies for my seeming delay in replying to your letter. The fact is that I have only just received it, having only just come to town.

As one of the public, let me hope that your health, or your leisure, will very soon allow you to fulfil the brilliant, and almost unrivalled promise of the works I have ventured to consider yours. And believe me,

Sir, with respect, obediently yours,

E. Lytton Bulwer.

Four months later, my father wrote again from Woodcot.

[1] Mr. Disraeli was a stern judge of his early writings, and already, at the date of my father's letter, he *did* reckon *Vivian Grey* among his 'juvenile indiscretions,' and would not allow it to be reprinted. When he included it among his works in 1853, because others persisted in printing what he desired to suppress, he prefixed to it an 'advertisement,' in which he says, with a critical felicity enhanced by the charm that he himself is the subject of it, 'Books written by boys, which pretend to give a picture of manners and to deal in knowledge of human nature, must necessarily be founded on affectation. They can be, at the best, but the results of imagination, acting upon knowledge not acquired by experience. Of such circumstances exaggeration is a necessary consequence, and false taste accompanies exaggeration. Nor is it necessary to remark that a total want of art must be observed in their pages; for that is a failing incident to all first efforts. Such productions should be exempt from criticism, and should be looked upon as a kind of literary lusus.'

The Same to the Same.

Woodcot: July 26, 1829.

Dear Sir,—I cannot express to you how much I was shocked by the melancholy account you give me of your health.

I have heard a high character of Dr. Vance's medical skill. Did you ever consult him? I earnestly trust that you may find speedy and effectual benefit from whomsoever you employ; and should you return to Buckinghamshire in the course of next month, I shall be extremely glad to welcome you here.

On the 24th of August my lease of Woodcot expires. I mention this lest *you* should have the trouble of calling in vain, and *I* the mortification of missing you.

My address in town is 36 Hertford Street, and if I do not see you at Woodcot I shall hope to receive you there.

It is one consolatory property of genius to find among strangers that interest which worth finds among friends: and with sincere anxiety for your health, and best (and I will add, most sanguine) wishes for its restoration,

Believe me, dear Sir, faithfully yours,
E. Lytton Bulwer.

'The Young Duke' was written in the following year, 1830: and the fact that it was submitted in manuscript to my father for his opinion and advice, is a proof of the cordial relations then established between the two writers of fiction. Those relations were founded in great part on the genuine interest they took in each other's work and success.

Mr. Disraeli's opinion of my father's friendship is shown in his selection of his brother-novelist for his critic. My father's trust is shown in the candour of his criticism.

The Same to the Same.

36 Hertford Street, Thursday night, April 10, 1830.

My dear Disraeli,—I have read through your manuscript with great attention, and it has afforded me a very uncommon gratification.

I could fill my letter with praises of its wit, the terseness and

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philosophy of its style, and the remarkable felicity with which you make the coldest insipidities of real life entertaining and racy. One would think you had been learning at Laputa how to extract sunbeams from cucumbers.

In the *genius* of your work I see not a flaw—nothing to point out to your attention. In the *judgment* of it I think you are less invariably happy.

You do not seem to me to do justice to your own powers when you are so indulgent to flippancies. I do think you should look with a harsh, and even hypercritical, eye upon all those antithetical neatnesses of style which make the great feature of your composition.

Whenever they attain a witticism or a new truth (which is nine times out of ten) don't alter a syllable. But whenever you see that form of words which aims at a point and does not acquire it, be remorseless.

I would have you write a book, not only to succeed, but to have that form of success which will hereafter be agreeable to yourself.

Decriers and enemies you must have. But don't give them an unnecessary handle, and don't unnecessarily increase their number.

The flippancies I allude to are an ornate and showy effeminacy, which I think you should lop off on the same principle as Lord Ellenborough should cut off his hair. In a mere fashionable novel aiming at no higher merit, and to a mere dandy aiming at nothing more solid, the flippancies and the hair might be left: and left gracefully. But I do not think the one suits a man who is capable of great things, nor the other a man who occupies great places.

At all events, if you do not think twice, and act alike upon this point, I fear you are likely to be attacked and vituperated to a degree which fame can scarcely recompense; and which, hereafter, may cause you serious inconvenience.

Recollect that you have written a book ('Vivian Grey') of wonderful promise, but which got you enemies. You have, therefore, to meet, in *this* book, a very severe ordeal, both of expectation and malice. You have attained in the book more than the excellences of 'Vivian Grey:' but I do not think you have enough avoided the faults.

If you feel, however, that what I have said does not hold good in the second and third volumes, never regard my frank impertinence

as worth attention. For the first volume, after all, signifies very little as compared with the end of the book.

But, should you suspect that I am the least right in this volume —and that this volume is a fair specimen of the others—put yourself, some morning, in a bad humour with Antithesis and Voltaire, and go carefully, pen in hand, over the manuscript.

I speak to you thus candidly,—first, because, unlike most advisers, I shall not think one whit the worse of you if you don't follow my advice—and, secondly, because (judging of you by myself) I think you will like even censure so long as it is *available*.

After all, your book is certain to take. And your criticisms exercised on yourself will not, perhaps, make it take *more*. They will only give it a right to take on higher and more permanent ground.

You have written a very fine, and a very original, thing. And all but a very sincere well-wisher would be perfectly satisfied with the display,

As a *trifle*—but not to be overlooked—I would give matured attention to the Duke's dress. I confess I think the blonde edgings too bold.

These are things (strange as it may seem) that make enemies, and scarcely make friends.

May Dacre is beautiful.

The egotisms I do not object to. They are always charming, and often exceedingly touching. Moreover, the interest of the story never flags; and you have agreeably belied my prediction of extravagance.

Pray excuse all this candour, and hold it for what it really is—a sign of my cordial and sincere interest in your success.

Wishing you also an entire and speedy restoration to health,

Believe me, my dear Disraeli, very truly yours,

E. Lytton Bulwer.

These suggestions, though they affected only the occasional excess of antithesis in which the contrasted ideas were too forced or too flippant, appear to have greatly discouraged the author of 'The Young Duke;' and, in his reply, he talked of casting aside his work altogether.

Hence the next letter.

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The Same to the Same.

36 Hertford Street: April 14, 1830.

My dear Disraeli,—You quite misconceive me, if you suppose for a moment that I wish you even to *dream* of suppressing your new book.

All I ask of you is to consider whether you will correct it.

I assure you I think it a very fine and brilliant book. But it has stuff in it worthy of severe polish; and occasional faults which render such polish more of use than it would be to a work of colder and—I do not say a more solid, but—a duller genius.

The faults I mean are only in such phrases as, 'He looked like a Messiah, and took wine,' 'He looked up, not to the sky, but the ceiling,' &c.

After all, I am more fastidious than others in these points, because I have the experience, and therefore the *warning*, of my own sins.

I should be particularly gratified by a sight of the other volumes, which are of more importance to success than the first. I did not like to ask you to let me see them, after my frankness. But, if you are not discouraged by it, pray give me a pleasure—and an honour—which I shall value very highly indeed.

I go out of town to-morrow for two weeks, but shall certainly be back for the first.

Many thanks for your kindness and trouble about Parliament. I have the satisfaction of telling you that I yesterday brought to a conclusion an affair of that sort, though it is not to be consummated till next session.

You may be sure of having, for the sake of your idle friends, one of the earliest copies of 'Paul Clifford,' with a copy of 'Falkland.'

Believe me, my dear Disraeli,

With great regard and interest,

Yours sincerely,

E. Lytton Bulwer.

And, in a line of slightly later date, he adds, 'Believe me, I was particularly flattered by your wish for a copy of "Paul Clifford." I hope I shall meet you to-morrow at my brother's;

and he will assure you of the fidelity with which I delivered your message.'

CHAP. V.

ÆT. 26–8

About this time, and in consequence of his ill-health, Mr. Disraeli again went abroad. He passed through Spain and Greece, on his way to the East; and there, for several months, he lingered among those scenes which inspired the 'Wondrous Tale of Alroy.'

That remarkable production, bearing, both in its ideas and its details, the stamp of an uncommon genius, has always seemed to me much underrated. Perhaps it is that, in all productions inspired by the Spirit of the East, the stamp of genius is like the seal of Solomon, which reveals nothing to those who have never felt the wizardry of Oriental spells: and whilst, in its conception, the 'Tale of Alroy' is uncongenial to the taste of a middle-class insular public such as ours, its execution transgresses the sobriety of imagination and expression desiderated by our literary connoisseurs.

The manner, however, in which the traveller brought his mind to bear upon what he saw and heard is one of the marvels of his career.

No other English statesman or author has shown, in his speeches or his works, so clear a conception of the permanent conditions of Eastern life and thought, or so profound a penetration into the moral recesses of Eastern character.

The portrait of the young Emir in 'Tancred' is a monument of familiar knowledge and sagacious insight: yet the time passed by its author in the East seems wholly insufficient to explain his wonderful understanding of populations which have not two ideas in common with our own.

Danton said that a man cannot carry his country away with him on the sole of his foot. But most Englishmen carry with them, in the balls of their eyes and the convolutions of their brain, so much of their own island that, after years of external contact with Orientals, they remain unconscious that

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the formulas of Western thought and the habits of Western feeling are quite inapplicable to the Eastern world.

From Constantinople Mr. Disraeli wrote to my father, at the end of this year, a letter full of character. It shows that to him the phraseology of 'Lothair' was not unnatural.

Benjamin Disraeli to Edward Bulwer.

Constantinople: December 27, 1830.

My dear Bulwer,—In spite of the extraordinary times and engrossing topics on which we have fallen, I flatter myself that you will be glad to hear of my existence, and know that it is in a state not quite so forlorn as when I last had the pleasure of enjoying your society.

Since then I have travelled through Spain, Greece, and Albania, and I am now a resident in this famous city.

I cannot easily express how much I was delighted with the first country. I no longer wonder at the immortality of Cervantes; and I perpetually detected, in the picturesque and *al fresco* life of his countrymen, the sources of his inspiration. The Alhambra, and other Saracenic remains, the innumerable Murillos, and, above all, their *olla podridas*, delighted me in turn.

I arrived at Malta time enough to name the favourite horse for the races 'Paul Clifford;' and I have since learnt, by a letter at this place, that he won the plate.

While at the little military hot-house, I heard that Albania was in a flaming insurrection; and, always having had a taste for campaigning, I hurried off with a couple of friends to offer our services to the Grand Vizier.

We found the insurrection, by the time of our arrival, nearly crushed. And so we turned our military trip into a visit of congratulation at head-quarters.

I must reserve for our meeting any account of our visit. I certainly passed at Yanina ten of the most extraordinary days of my life; and often wished that you had been my companion.

Of all the places I have yet visited, Athens most completely realised all I could have wished. The place requires no associations to render it one of the most delightful in the globe. I am not surprised that the fine taste of the dwellers in this delicate

land should have selected the olive for their chosen tree, and the violet for their favourite flower.

I confess to you that my Turkish prejudices are very much confirmed by my residence in Turkey. The life of this people greatly accords with my taste, which is naturally somewhat indolent and melancholy. And I do not think it would disgust you.

To repose on voluptuous ottomans, and smoke superb pipes, daily to indulge in the luxuries of a bath which requires half-a-dozen attendants for its perfection; to court the air in a carved caïque, by shores which are a perpetual scene; and to find no exertion greater than a canter on a barb; this is, I think, a far more sensible life than all the bustle of clubs, all the boring of drawing-rooms, and all the coarse vulgarity of our political controversies.

And all this, I assure you, is, without any colouring or exaggeration, the life which may be here commanded. A life accompanied by a thousand sources of calm enjoyment, and a thousand modes of mellowed pleasure, which it would weary you to relate, and which I leave to your own lively imagination.

I can say nothing about our meeting, but pray that it may be sooner than I can expect. I send you a tobacco bag, that you may sometimes remember me. If you have leisure to write me a line, anything directed to Messrs. Hunter & Ross, Malta, will be forwarded to whatever part of the Levant I may reside in.

I mend slowly, but mend. The seasons have greatly favoured me. Continual heat. And even here, where the winter is proverbially cold, there is a summer sky. Remember me most kindly to your brother, and

Believe me, ever, my dear Bulwer,

Your most faithful

Benj. Disraeli.

P.S.—I have just got through a pile of Galignanis. What a confusion! and what an excellent pantomime! 'Lord Mayor's Day, or Harlequin Brougham!'

Oh, for the days of Aristophanes, or Foote, or even Scaremouch! D——n the Licenser!

D.

Mr. Disraeli returned to England improved in health, towards the end of the following year: and this was my father's next letter to him.

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Edward Bulwer to Benjamin Disraeli.

Hertford Street: November 8, 1831.

My dear Disraeli,—If I am not among the very first, let me at least not be the last, to congratulate you on your safe return. I only heard of it yesterday from our common ally, of the Burlington Street Delphos.

'Mr. Disraeli, sir, is come to town—young Mr. Disraeli! Won't he give us a nice light article about his travels?'

Of that hereafter. But, while at present neglecting the hint of our worthy publisher, I do not forget it.[1]

I don't know if you ever got a long letter I sent you to Constantinople, acknowledging the safe receipt of your slippers,[2] your tobacco-bag, and your epistle. A thousand thanks for all three.

Mrs. Bulwer has, this day, 'presented me with a son,' as 'the polite' express it. So I have a good reason for being brief in my communications to you. But pray write and let me know how you are.

Yours, &c.

E. L. B.

P.S.—Congratulations on the success of the 'Young Duke,' whom I had the pleasure of seeing before his *début*.

The Same to the Same.

(Undated.)

My dear Disraeli,—I seize the only scrap of paper I can find to tell you how delighted I am by your kindly opinion of 'Paul Clifford.'

I am less charmed, as you will imagine, by your news of the 'Young Duke.' Such communications, however, are merely in the way of business. I was overwhelmed by them in the matter of 'Pelham.' 'Its obscenity was only equalled by its dulness, &c. &c.' I feel quite sure he will do well, and shame these printer's devils and their masters.

Adieu, my dear fellow. Take care of yourself, and believe me

Always and sincerely yours,

E. L. B.

[1] My father, as already mentioned, was now editing the *New Monthly Magazine*.

[2] The slippers were a gift to my mother.

Mr. Disraeli acceded to the wish that he should become a contributor to the 'New Monthly Magazine,' and my father writes to him: 'Mr. Colburn has sent me nine guineas for your little paper on Egypt, and the present paper of "Harlequin:" this being at the rate of twenty guineas a sheet, his highest pay. Fie on these money matters! They shall have nothing to do with the new Parallelogram World.'

The 'Harlequin' paper was a clever little *jeu d'esprit*, entitled 'THE SPEAKING HARLEQUIN: OR, TWO LOSSES IN THREE ACTS.' It deserves to be reclaimed from oblivion. 'The Wondrous Tale of Alroy,' and 'Ixion in Heaven' (the latter unsurpassed in wit by anything Disraeli ever wrote) were also published in the 'New Monthly Magazine' during my father's editorship.

At this period, Mr. Disraeli's many troubles from feeble health and straitened circumstances were embittered by one of those disappointments of the heart which are always vehement in strong natures.

'It seemed to me,' he wrote, 'that the barriers of my life were all simultaneously failing. Friendship with the rest. But *you*, too, have suffered; and will therefore sympathise with one of too irritable a temperament, whose philosophy generally arrives too late.

Our friendship, my dear Bulwer, has already stood many a test. If I analyse the causes of its strength, I would ascribe them, in some degree at least, to a warm heart on my part and a generous nature upon yours.

Then let this friendship never dissolve. For my heart shall never grow cold to you, and be yours always indulgent to

Your affectionate Friend,

B. D.

The friendship never did dissolve: because, upon both sides, it was based on a well-grounded confidence in the fine and sterling qualities to which it owed its origin.

But time and circumstance gradually diminished their

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intercourse without abating their esteem. They had strong opinions and sympathies in common, and appeared, for a time, to be travelling the same road. Both were throwing off in works of imagination the thoughts and feelings suggested by a keen observation of the world around them. Both had set their hearts on getting into Parliament, that they might play their part in the one grand arena of politics. Both were fighting an unbefriended battle, and owed nothing in their literary life to the support of a clique, or in public life to the favour of a party. Both were successful in the double career they adopted. But the highest success of one was in politics, and that of the other was in literature.

Here was the difference which, in spite of the parallel in their lives, led them, as time went on, into divergent paths. It may be discerned in the earliest writings of Disraeli that his master ambition was to become a power in the State. With all his love of letters, the desire to take his place among the rulers of the world so vastly predominated that his ultimate end in literature was to use it as a ladder to political life. His native indolence, his narrow means, his pecuniary difficulties, his isolated position, his repeated checks—all were impotent to resist the indomitable will and persevering genius which carried him at length, amidst unusual acclaim, to the summit of his aspirations.

With my father, the passion for letters preponderated. And, whereas literature was but an appendage to the political career of Disraeli, politics were only the appendage to the literary labours of his friend.

Thus, when long years afterwards they came together as colleagues in the same Cabinet, it was the reunion of persons who had been following distinctly separate vocations, and had contracted dissimilar habits of mind. The cordiality and the sentiment remained: and in their political principles they had more in common with each other than either of them

had with the mass of those around them. But the central life that made the moving spring within them was not the same.

I do not think that my father's intercourse with this remarkable man had any perceptible influence upon the growth of his own genius. What he owed in this way to others was a subject on which he was very outspoken. But I cannot remember having ever heard from him the smallest indication that he traced any part of his ideas to his intimacy with an individuality which, in politics, was by far the most original of his time.

It was the reverse with Lord Beaconsfield; who told me, not long before his death, that my father's conversation had always conveyed to him new and productive ideas, and that he reckoned him among the two or three persons whose minds had exercised a distinct effect upon the development of his own.

Throughout the greater part of Disraeli's early career, his true character was very imperfectly perceived, and the real solidity of his intellect greatly underrated. My father's early recognition of his rare gifts was never for a moment obscured by the ridicule with which mediocre men, for many years, were accustomed to speak of the political pretensions of the future Premier, as if he were merely a spouting charlatan. But neither did his opinion of the quality and order of his friend's genius equal the public estimation of them at the close of that unique career which my father did not live to see.

What he did not see, however, he foresaw. His well-known interest in studies of an occult and mystical description, which will fill a chapter in the story of his later life, led him for many years to find amusement in the process of divination called 'Geomancy.' And at Wildbad, in 1860, he cast and interpreted the subjoined Geomantic Figure of the character and career of Benjamin Disraeli.

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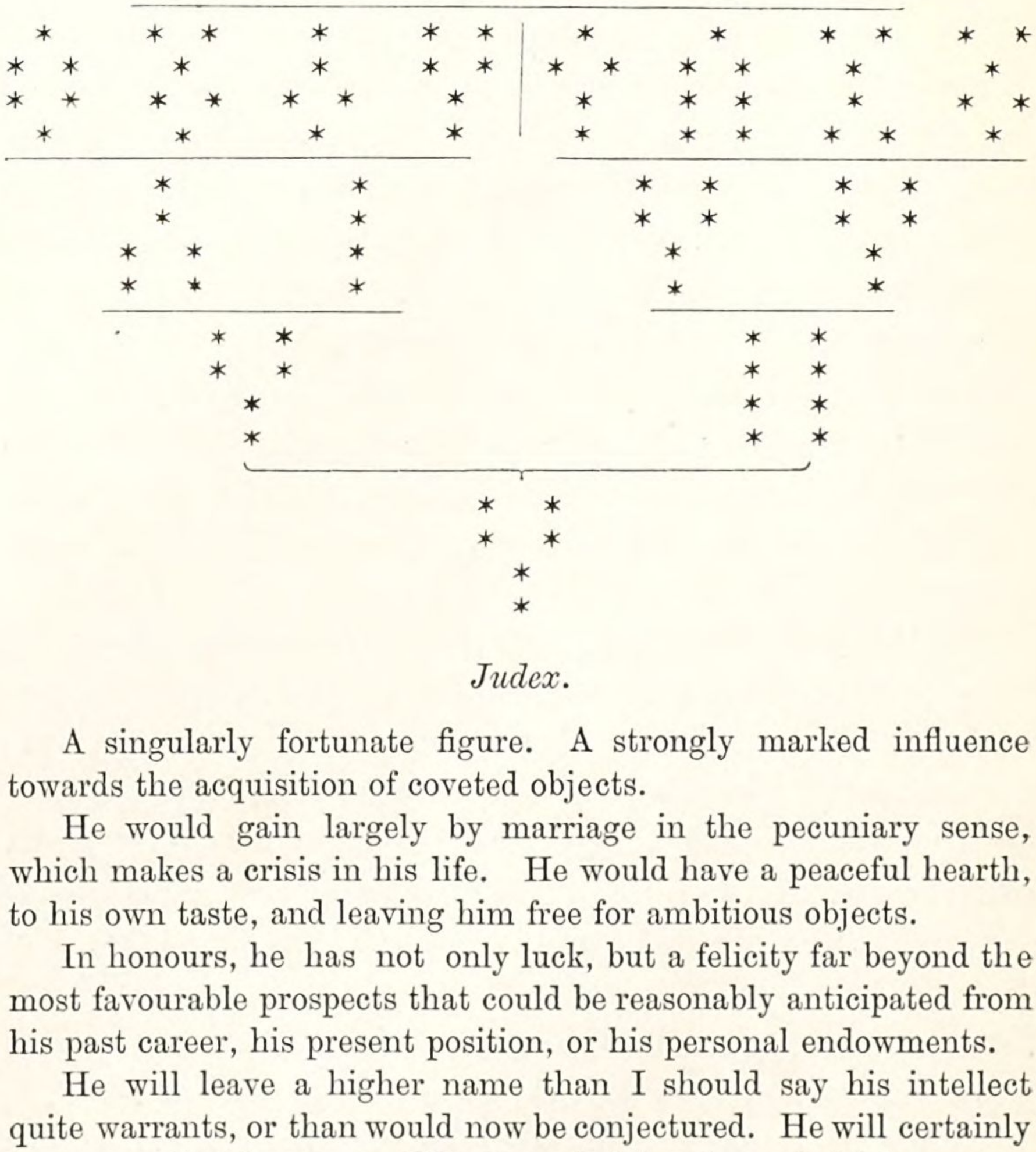
GEOMANTIC FIGURE.

B. DISRAELI.

WILDBAD: SEPTEMBER 3, 1860.



Judex.

A singularly fortunate figure. A strongly marked influence towards the acquisition of coveted objects.

He would gain largely by marriage in the pecuniary sense, which makes a crisis in his life. He would have a peaceful hearth, to his own taste, and leaving him free for ambitious objects.

In honours, he has not only luck, but a felicity far beyond the most favourable prospects that could be reasonably anticipated from his past career, his present position, or his personal endowments.

He will leave a higher name than I should say his intellect quite warrants, or than would now be conjectured. He will certainly have *very high* honours. Whether official or in rank, high as compared with his birth or actual achievements.

He has a temperament that finds pleasure in what belongs to social life. He has not the reserve common to literary men.

He has considerable veneration, and will keep well with Church and State. Not merely from policy, but from sentiment and instinct.

His illnesses will be few and quick. But his last illness may be lingering. He is likely to live to old age,—the close of his career much honoured.

He will be, to the last, largely before the public. Much feared by his opponents, but greatly beloved, not only by those immediately about him, but by large numbers of persons to whom he is personally unknown. He will die, whether in or out of office, in an exceptionally high position, greatly lamented, and surrounded to the end by all the magnificent planetary influences of a propitious Jupiter.

No figure I have drawn more surprises me than this. It is so completely opposed to what I myself should have augured, not only from the rest of his career, but from my knowledge of the man.

He will bequeath a repute out of all proportion to the opinion now entertained of his intellect even by those who think most highly of it.

Greater honours far than he has yet acquired are in store for him. His enemies, though active, are not persevering. His official friends, though not ardent, will yet minister to his success.

E. L. B.

Though specious in theory, nothing can be falser in fact than the common saying that all the world is wiser than any man in it, if by this it be meant that the voice of the multitude is nearer the truth than the judgment of a sage. The popular estimate of eminent men is, in the majority of cases, the extravagant offspring of hearsay, which gathers force by repetition. When once the cry is taken up, the cuckoo-note, as it passes from mouth to mouth, assumes a sort of collective magnitude. Exaggeration is its necessary aliment. In the hasty correction of an erroneous belief one extreme is succeeded by another, and perhaps we may rightly ascribe to this cause the fact that my father's opinion was in a mean between the earliest and the latest popular estimate of his friend's character; so that he, who asserted the genius of Disraeli when it was depreciated,

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was surprised at the glories revealed by his Geomantic Figure.

But whatever may be the truth in this particular, the singularity is the same—that the geomantic conclusions were not suggested by my father's views, but in glaring opposition to them.

The event, which verified his divination, contradicted his judgment.

CHAPTER VI.

(Supplementary.)

'GREVILLE.' 1829. ÆT. 26.

'THE DISOWNED' was published in the winter of 1828, and 'Devereux' in the summer of 1829. Between these two dates my father began the composition of another novel of modern life; and the plot of it appears to have been completely worked out in his own mind, for its synopsis is appended to the manuscript.

It is evident that he had spent a good deal of thought upon a work which was designed to be what he called it, 'A Satire upon Fine Life.' I can feel little doubt that he abandoned it, not because the satire appeared to him ineffectual, but because he perceived that it was growing too personal. He drew his picture from living types in a limited sphere, and feared that the characters would not pass for the unappropriated creations of fiction.

Nothing can be more delightful, nothing more stimulating to literary production, than congenial society small in size but comprehensive in character. Each of its members brings to the common stock some happy specialty. Wit strikes fire from wit in the amicable collision of minds; ideas mingle together and become fruitful; and all without rivalry, effort, or pretension.

But the charm of such a society entirely depends upon the intimacy of its members: an intimacy incompatible with the

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conditions of that semi-exclusive social world which great people call 'general,' and small people call 'fine.'

Its cheerless assemblies, that bring together, in a chaos of physical discomfort and intellectual barrenness, persons of unsettled position struggling for notice, and of commanding position struggling for influence, were fitfully frequented by my father in his youth. But in after years he only re-entered them as an occasional visitant.

His impatience of their intrinsic inanity was undisguised: and a passage from one of his juvenile pieces called 'HADES, OR HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS,' which dates from 1824, is evidence of how early they wearied him.

In this piece, the author, transported by a vision to the Infernal Regions, is conducted through them by a Quaker-like Spirit, whom he at first mistakes for 'a Scotch lawyer, or a political economist,' and who obligingly explains to him the political constitution of the place.

> Just then, a coxcombical sort of demon, delicately clothed, with a mean look, but a supercilious air, sauntered by, carrying in his hand a card on which was written, 'The Countess of Belial at home.' My curiosity was excited. 'Do they give parties in Hell?' I asked.
>
> 'Certainly,' said my Mentor. 'The giving of, and going to, parties is one of the chief punishments here. One half of Hell is compelled to give them. The other half of Hell is compelled to go to them. The localities in which these punishments are inflicted are invariably the hottest corners in Hell; and by some sort of infernal infatuation all the sufferers are impelled forward into the most burning berth of the torture chambers appropriated to this kind of torment. They can't help it. There is no escape for them.'

He was equally familiar with those little literary tea-gardens which are the resort of second-rate aspirants. The contempt he entertained for them was great: nor was any position more repugnant to him than that of a literary lion. Already the feeling was fully formed when he wrote his youthful satire upon 'Almack's':—

'O Genius, thou should'st only dwell
On lonely mount, in secret cell,
Or, if amid the world awhile
Thy strange and wandering steps are found,
Not thine the voice and vacant smile
Which suit the meaner race around.
In truth thou wert not made to sip
At Lydia White's thy wonted tea,
With hoarded jest, and laughing lip,
The Touchstone of the Coterie.'

'Greville' was the ironical representation of all these pretentious insipidities; and, at the point where he broke it off, my father must have become conscious that his models would probably recognise and resent their unflattering portraits.

To escape the temptation to satirise his contemporaries, he turned his thoughts altogether from the living generation, and fixed them on a bygone time. So 'Greville' was discarded, and 'Devereux' begun.

The representative names in the novel would not be more significant to us if the originals of the satire were all identified. They were in their essence ephemeral beings. The interest of the story lies in its exhibition of certain phases of human nature, and the accurate description of what Disraeli (speaking of his own sketches of the same times in the 'Young Duke') has called 'the fleeting manners of a somewhat frivolous age,' when George IV. was King.

The one instance in which the interest is heightened by substituting the real for the fictitious name is in that of the hero. For the character of Clare Greville, as described in the fifth chapter of the unfinished tale, is a nearly exact portrait of my father himself; modified only here and there by some traits borrowed from the character of his friend Frederick Villiers. As, for instance, when he says: 'There was not much probability that Greville would ever come prominently forward in public life. His system was thoroughly saturated with indifference. He wanted nothing but ambition to become

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a great man; but he was likely always to want that, and always, therefore, to remain what he was.'

This passage and some others in the description of Greville's intellectual temperament were transcripts from the idiosyncrasy of his friend. The rest was as truly a literal transcript of his own.

But besides its autobiographical interest, the novel is not without value as a contemporary sketch of London life at a time which, though still recent, is already antiquated.

It contains descriptions of the streets, the parks, the clubs, the amusements, and the small talk of London, as they were fifty years ago: when Mr. Nash was the fashionable architect, when dandies still flourished, when Crockford's and Almack's were in all their glory, and the Bond Street Lounger was not yet extinct.

And, even if it be regarded only as a sample of my father's first period of authorship, this fragment has, I think, some points of interest unaffected by the considerations which should deter a great artist from the exhibition of his unfinished sketches during his life. For all such considerations are inapplicable after his death; when the qualities we admire in his finest efforts will render interesting, and often instructive, those specimens of his immature workmanship which illustrate the progress of the artist's powers.

We like to see genius in its growth, and to compare the early promise with the ultimate result. Some, no doubt, may despise such unfinished and defective remains; but they are under no obligation to read them.

CHAP. VI.

ÆT. 26

GREVILLE:

A SATIRE UPON FINE LIFE.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

EVERYONE knows that England is the most charming country in the world, especially for those who like to be amused. In that 'moral air' the people are so wise that mirth would be altogether out of character. It is only in their parliaments that they stoop to levity. They there concentrate the witticisms of a whole nation in one individual, and they call that individual Sir Joseph York. In a social state they exclude the impertinence of *bon mots*, and exult in a stupendous monotony of *ennui*.

Everyone also is perfectly aware that the most delightful place in this brilliant country is called Hyde Park. A country retreat where a vast number of women drive about in carriages to admire the beauties of nature, while the most intellectual young men in the world make short speeches on the weather and long odds upon horses. Truly great minds being attentive to the smallest trifles. It is not, indeed, only the native charms of the place which attract thither so perpetual a crowd. The people of that country overflow with affection to their acquaintances, and can scarcely live a day without seeing them. They flock, therefore, to Hyde Park to enjoy that benevolent felicity. Nothing can be a greater proof of the national kindness of feeling. For, despite the attractions of this sublunary Eden, people profess to be very much bored there. The wonderfully wise are easily sated. The most learned man I ever knew —a German—went of his own accord into the other world because, having learnt, he said, everything worth learning, he had nothing further to do in this: and the English, having fully enjoyed at home the dignity of boring themselves, go out for the refreshment of boring others.

There are one or two peculiarities in this Park which are not unworthy of philosophical speculation. The English women, being proverbially the modestest ladies in the world, have, in the most conspicuous part of the Arcadian scene, erected in honour of Arthur, Duke of Wellington, proverbially the modestest man so far as ladies are concerned, an enormous statue, entirely naked. There is a story in history about the Roman ladies generously clubbing together all

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their jewels for some patriotic purpose; the English ladies, fonder of jewels but equally generous, in a fit of enthusiasm and gratitude clubbed together all their bronze. Hence this statue.

The deer in this Park generally die of eating leather and oranges, and you would think by their colour and consistency that the trees also died of the same complaint.

It was in this charming scene, where time is always well spent and would never flag were not people, as I have said, so prodigiously wise as to think everyone and everything else a little dull in comparison—it was in this scene early one morning in April, viz., about the time common people are going to supper, that two young men were riding together and delighting each other with sentiments like those of Voltaire's memorable Ass—

très nobles et délicats,
Très peu connus des ânes d'ici bas—

which lines, being paraphrased, mean (the reason is better than the rhymes)—

Sentiments having such delicate wit in
Each turn as are known but to asses of Britain.

The elder of these gentlemen was about thirty-five years of age. He was mounted on a bay horse which to a 'particular friend' he would have warranted sound, but of which to a horse-dealer his love of truth might have induced him to confess to somewhat a different character. Nevertheless, the horse was showy and comely, and could go four times round the Park without exhibiting any very visible fatigue. The dress of this cavalier was a black frock coat, a striped baptiste neckcloth of green and grey, and brown trousers. This description is more accurate than grand, but there is no sublimity in English colours. In France one's coat is of the hues of the dust of ruins, and one's extremities exhibit the tender tints of a frog dying for love. The eyes of the cavalier were large, round, staring, and black; they were thought exceedingly fine by himself, and also by three nursery-maids whom he courted severally twice a week in the Regent's Park.

Captain Desborough, such was his name, was admired by all his friends as *un homme à bonnes fortunes*; few Englishmen are so exalted in their amorous aspirations. For the rest, Captain Desborough was well born, well padded, and well received; he had no fortune, but he had a very large acquaintance—he lived entirely on the latter, and nobody lived more comfortably than Captain Desborough.

The other cavalier, the Captain's companion, was seemingly about twenty-one years old, tall, thin, fair, and exceedingly well-dressed. You might easily observe that he was new to London. He looked with a respectful envy upon crack dandies (those very low people), he admired girls more than married women, he took care to *tell* his companion that he was going to Almack's on Wednesday, and he thought Captain Desborough a very fine person.

This young man's name was James Milner Clavering. He had just obtained possession of a new baronetcy and a large estate; and, God willing, he was well calculated by nature and ambition to become in a few years as respectable and as poor as the Captain, his model and his friend. He had some fine qualities, he was good-natured, generous, a bold rider, and a bit of a fool. Few people possess traits of character more certain to ensure popularity.

Slowly did these gentlemen ride; Sir James Clavering glancing into every carriage, and Captain Desborough looking straight before him. The former because he thought it well-bred to recognise as many people as possible, the latter because he thought it well-bred to see nobody.

'So,' said Captain Desborough, 'so you have a letter of introduction to Greville, have you? Gad, I don't envy you; he is the most impertinent person in town.'

'Hem—ha—indeed. I understood he was very clever and very much the mode.'

'The mode! why he *is* thought a gentlemanlike fellow, and the women quote his sayings, which *I* think very bad; but as for being clever——' Captain Desborough paused significantly.

'He is silly, then, is he?'

'Why I don't say that exactly, but you know how Jack Fooksly cheated him at *écarté*. Now a man who is cheated by Jack Fooksly can't be very clever.'

'But he knew he was cheated, I believe.'

'Worse and worse. You remember what he said to Jack; it was d—d impertinent—I wonder Jack didn't call him out.'

'No, what *did* he say?'

'"Mr. Fooksly," said he, paying him the money, "he who best flatters our foibles is the best bred of men. I shall always speak of you as the most accomplished courtier of my acquaintance." "Thank you," says Jack. "What do you mean?" "Why, you know my foible is a contempt for what we call gentlemen, and you

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have given it the most exquisite gratification by showing me for how paltry a piece of paper a gentleman will turn rogue.'' '

'Deuced severe,' said Sir James.

'Severe, but not clever; anyone can be rude. Why I told Jobson the horse-dealer this very day that he was a d—d rascal. Nobody calls *that* clever, but it was just as sharp, I think, as Mr. Greville's little speech.'

'Quite. What sort of a looking fellow is Greville?—Handsome?'

'Not at all, he has red hair; but it is a fine thing to get a name. They say he is an Antinous.'

'And is he impertinent to all people?'

'I suppose so. He was horridly impertinent to the Duke of Lushington; and if a man is impertinent to *him*, it is not likely he will be civil to anyone else.'

'Very true.'

'And though so devilishly affected, he is very fond of low company.'

'Low company! you amaze me.'

'Yes, he wrote word to Lady Finelow that he was very sorry he could not meet His Royal Highness the Duke of —— at her house, for he was particularly engaged to his intimate friend, Mr. Hopkins, in Bloomsbury Square.'

'Hopkins—Bloomsbury Square! How excessively odd. Well, I thought Clare Greville quite a different person.'

'And this Mr. Hopkins is a linendraper's son.'[1]

'Horrible,' cried Sir James Milner Clavering in virtuous indignation, 'and Clare Greville of so old a family too!'

'Is he of an old family?—not related to *the* Grevilles, I think.'

'No, but a branch of the same stock, equally old. His estates in Somersetshire, adjoining mine, have been in the family since the Conquest.'

'Well, it won't be Greville's fault if they go to another generation.'

'What, he is very extravagant?'

'Extravagant! He gave two thousand pounds for a paltry statue the other day.'

'God bless me! he is fond of the arts then?'

[1] The memoirs of Harriet Wilson show that even women of her class were cut by the dandies and wits of that time if seen in the Park with any man not known to be well-born.

'Not particularly, I believe. He says he doesn't know much about pictures, and I am sure he knows nothing about *music* or *horses*. No, it was mere wanton extravagance, and yet he is cursed stingy too in some things. He would not raffle for my bay filly, though it was only five guineas a ticket.'

'You don't say so! By-the-by, when does the raffle come on? You recollect I have two tickets.'

'To be sure, to be sure, my dear fellow, and I hope with all my heart that you may get her. She will carry your weight famously. I am a little too heavy for her. She is a sweet creature, leaps as if she had a spring-board in her hoofs. Ha! is that Lady Milsom? You *can* see. I am so horribly shortsighted. Just look, Clavering, there's a good fellow.'

Sir James, though rather affronted to be thought able to see, obeyed the request; and, he having declared that the lady walking by herself with no other attendant than a footman *was* Lady Milsom, the two gentlemen drew up to the railings of the Park, gave their horses to Sir James's groom, and joined the lady whom they were both glowing with pride to know, and whom one could not see, and the other was ashamed to see. How true are the maxims of national pride! What a wonderful vein of manly simplicity does run through the English character!

'Ah, Sir James Clavering, how are you, and you, Mr. Desborough? Well, I am quite glad to see you, for I know neither of you talk on politics, and really I have heard of nothing else for the last three months.'

''Tis a great bore, that House of Commons,' said Captain Desborough. (Some savage nations think fools are inspired.)

'But what is not a bore?' said the lady.

'Except Lady Milsom,' said Sir James, colouring and thinking it fine to compliment.

'Do you really think so? No, I don't wish to be eccentric, and I am sure I am as dull as the rest of the world. At least, now and then.'

'The rest of the world will contradict you,' said Sir James, and he bowed this time, as well as coloured.

The lady did not pay all that attention to this speech which she ought to have done—she looked in an opposite direction.

'Is that Clare Greville?' said she.

'Upon my word I don't know,' said the Captain, 'I am really so nearsighted.'

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'Are you? Well, I pity you. Greville says it is the worst taste in the world to be nearsighted.'

'I should like to know what business Mr. Greville has to say anything at all about it,' quoth the bold captain.

'Oh no treason! here he comes, he shall tell you his reasons for thinking so.'

'Excuse me, Lady Milsom, it is a d—d bore to hear a fellow talk such nonsense as Greville does. Good morning; you will be at Mrs. Holroyd's to-night?'

'Don't know, possibly.'

'Which is Mr. Greville?' said Clavering.

'There, but you can't see him, he has just turned back with the crowd. I wonder what brings him into the Park.'

'Why, does he not often come here every day like anyone else?'

'Like anyone else! How little you know of Mr. Greville; it is quite enough that everyone else does a thing to make him forswear it for ever.'

'He must be a very eccentric person.'

It will be perceived that Sir James Clavering testified a particular acuteness in drawing logical deductions from certain data. I wish I could say as much for Mr. Uphoma,[1] the gentleman who writes histories of the Ottoman Empire.

'Yes, he is eccentric, but delightful to those he likes.'

'Indeed, I understood he was shockingly disagreeable, very rude, and very impertinent. For my part I wonder he has not got shot yet!'

'Oh, but he is not often rude *in that way*, and when he is, it is generally to people who know that he is no bad shot himself, so I hear at least.'

'Good heavens!' cried Sir James Milner Clavering, who had the merciless nerves of a man of twenty-one, 'you don't mean to say that gentlemen will let themselves be bullied by any fellow merely because he is a good shot?'

'Bless me, Sir James, how energetic you are! No, I should hope not, but I have heard that a Mr. Fitzgerald, generally termed "the fighting," stalked into a certain celebrated clubroom and insulted all the members without receiving an answer, much less a challenge from one of them. But in the first place Greville

[1] Sic in MS.

is not at all a bully; he is the most courteous and ceremonious person alive.'

'Well, I am quite puzzled; everyone else says he is so insolent.'

'Yes, but he is ceremoniously insolent. Enough of him now. I must wish you good-bye too. I am going to Roehampton; you come to me to-morrow evening.'

'Certainly,' and Sir James Clavering escorted the lady to her carriage.

All ladies and gentlemen drop pearls and diamonds out of their mouths; common people, on the contrary, drop toads and lizards.

CHAPTER VII.

(*Supplementary.*)

GREVILLE CONTINUED. 1829. ÆT. 26.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

London, thou comprehensive word,
Thy independence let me share.

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So sings Mr. Lutterel. Certainly London is the only place in the world for independence, and Londoners are the only independent people. They do exactly what they like, and they never care three straws what their neighbours say of them.

Sir James Milner Clavering, therefore, having a very bad headache and being excessively desirous of going to bed, dressed himself at half-past twelve and went to Mrs. Holroyd's ball, lest if he did not go people should say he could not get there.

The hostess was a woman of the world, and in the world she had three daughters and eight hundred friends. In the old classical times a man generally asked his friend to marry his daughter; in the present times it is the women who ask it. There is some difference in the result: in the former age the friend generally accepted the offer, in the present he generally refuses it.

Mrs. Holroyd had eight hundred friends, and Sir James Milner Clavering made the eight hundredth and one. He was forthwith introduced to the daughters, and he danced a quadrille with the eldest. The young lady's name was Amelia.

'You must be enchanted with London,' said Miss Amelia, 'there is always so much going on. Shall you go into the army?'

'Why, I really don't know yet. I have thoughts of belonging to the Blues.'

'Oh, delightful! they are the most charming set of people, live quite like brothers. Adolphus, *my* brother, was going into that regi-

ment, but papa thought it too expensive, and he has now gone into the *forty something*. But it is for you to go on, Cavalier Seul.'

Sir James having accomplished his saltatory task, the conversation was resumed.[1]

'Were you in the Park to-day, Sir James?'

'Yes, it was very full and very hot.'

'Oh yes, *charmingly so*! How pretty Lady Agnes Percivale looked on horseback. Is it true that she is going to be married?'

'I don't know, I am sure—to whom?'

'Oh, Mr. Clare Greville. A great match for him, though he is immensely rich, I hear—thirty thousand a year.'

'Pardon me, Greville can scarcely have six thousand a year, and I doubt whether he has that. I am sure he has no more, for his estates adjoin mine, and I know every acre of them.'

'But he has money in the funds.'

'Yes, he had twenty thousand pounds when he came of age; my father was trustee to old Greville's will.'

'Well, you surprise me—chaine anglaise—I heard he was so rich; *but for my part I always disliked him*; he never dances, you know, and he was so rude to Mamma. She declares she will cut him: and so she would if it was not for Lady Milsom and Lady Lynchmere, who make such a fuss about him. Besides, you know, one dare not cut him, for he says it is so vulgar to cut anyone.'

'People seem all to dislike him, and yet always to quote him,' quoth Sir James.

'Exactly so. Will you go into the refreshment-room? He was to have been here to-night. Mamma will be miserable if he does not come. She has told everybody he will, but of course for that very reason he'll stay away. A strawberry ice, if you please. Thank you.'

The dance was over; Sir James Milner Clavering sought the doorway, planted his back to the wall, and fell into conversation with Captain Desborough.

'That is rather a neat waistcoat of Lovell's,' said Sir James, who was of an age when a man's waistcoats are more observed than his words. 'Who is that very pretty girl he is talking with?'

'Lady Agnes Percivale. Shall I introduce you? She is a particular flirt of mine, and a deuced nice girl, full of talk.'

'Thank you, I wish you *would* introduce me. She is going to be married to Greville, I hear.'

[1] In those days the quadrille steps were danced.

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'Pooh, I should think not. She is sure to marry a duke, but people do tell such lies about marriage. Why they said she was in love with *me*, but that I could not endure the thought of the noose.'

'Ha, ha, but will you present me now?'

'Certainly.'

The two gentlemen lounged up to Lady Agnes, who, unlike beauties *à la mode*, was really handsome; and who, being handsome, had also the good fortune to be exceedingly clever. What her other qualities were I will keep at present unrevealed.

A very different person from Miss Amelia Holroyd did Sir James Clavering find Lady Agnes Percivale.

Nothing is more *mauvais ton* than the conversation of a silly young lady who talks of mamma and wants to be thought fine; it is particularly so when, like Miss Amelia Holroyd's, it is put down upon paper, stripped of all the tones and smiles with which it is orally delivered. Lady Agnes's conversation was better than Miss Holroyd's, because she was sensible instead of silly, and did not wish to be thought finer than she was.

While Lady Agnes was conversing with Clavering a tall woman, brilliant with beauty and diamonds, joined them. Clavering looked and looked, and thought he had never seen anything so striking as this lady's countenance and air. She was of a remarkable and masculine height; her features of the majestic order and dazzling fairness of Saxon beauty, her hair of the richest gold, bright, luxuriant, and dressed *à la Calypse*; her eyes were blue and large, her teeth of the most brilliant whiteness, her rounded arms shone through her *séduisantes*; her hands and feet were, if not small, as small as the proportions of her figure would admit of; and her carriage was so full of grace, quiet, and *undramatic* dignity, that she was quite the *beau-idéal* of a princess whom a young poet would wish to be page to. This lady was just at that time of life when ladies in my eyes are most dangerous, viz. about thirty-nine in reality, and about twenty-seven by courtesy.

'My aunt, Lady Bellenden,' said Lady Agnes slightly. 'Sir James Clavering.'

The introduction was effected, and conversation proceeded as fluently as before. At last Lady Agnes and her aunt took their departure. Clavering escorted them to their carriage and returned to the supper-room a little smitten, he could scarcely tell with which of the two, and particularly enamoured of a very fine lobster-salad.

Meanwhile, within the sacred walls of their carriage, Lady Agnes and the Saxon beauty held 'converse high.'

'I think,' said the latter, delicately yawning, 'Sir James Clavering seems a very nice person.'

By-the-by, there are two cant words exceedingly in use now: one is 'nice,' and the other 'agreeable.' The former means a person one may safely dance with, the latter a person one may without much peril venture to ask to dinner.

'A very nice person,' answered Lady Agnes, 'but a little stupid.'

'And rich too, I believe,' rejoined Lady Bellenden, not noticing the saving clause of her niece.

'Very likely,' said Lady Agnes.

There was a pause.

'Was Mr. Greville at Mrs. Holroyd's?' asked Lady Bellenden.

'No—that is, I did not see him.'

There was another pause.

The carriage stopped at the house of Lady Agnes: the door was opened: and, as Lady Bellenden pressed the hand and kissed the forehead of the young beauty, she said in a low whisper, 'There are some more dangerous than Sir James Clavering. Beware!'

The words were nothing, but Lady Bellenden's voice was deep and agitated. Lady Agnes snatched away her hand very hastily, and disappeared.

'Where to, my lady?' said the footman.

Lady Bellenden made no answer.

The man paused and repeated the question.

'To H—— House—no—*home*!'

'Home!' cried the footman, and to that sacred scene of English enjoyments, that theme of glory to Britain and songs for Miss Tree, was whirled Lady Bellenden.

As she entered the hall of her house—other novelists would say of her princely mansion, but I think houses in London so wretchedly bad that I cannot, except in poetry, indulge in such magnificent phraseology—as she entered her hall she met Lord Bellenden, who was just walking to his cabriolet, with that sort of vacillating stiffness which belongs to a very stately man when he is very comfortably drunk.

Lord and Lady Bellenden were great Tories; and they set up for being remarkably domestic, in opposition to those rascally Whigs who are always jesting at anything like morality and good feeling.

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Accordingly, as she had only seen him once for the last three days, Lady Bellenden now stopped and accosted her husband.

'Ah, my dear lord! this is an unexpected pleasure. Are you going to H—— House, or shall I see you in my boudoir?'

'I am going to—to—Crockford's,' said the husband, speaking as clearly as he was able, 'but I shall see you to—to—morrow at breakfast; don't let me keep you in—in—this d—d thorough draught. Good-night. Why don't you drive to the pavement—you—you—Philpot—Sir!—good-night—Lady Bellenden—take care of yourself.'

With these words this amiable pair parted, and Lady Bellenden sought her dressing-room. There, dismissing her woman, she threw herself back in a large fauteuil, and, covering her face with her hands, seemed lost in reflection.

'Can—he—can he,' she muttered, 'love her—her—no. No—impossible.' And, after murmuring these few words, she remained for a long time sunk in profound dejection. When she rose from her reverie the cheeks, no longer concealed, were perfectly pale, and large tears rolled fast and burningly down them. Those are just the tears which it is so delicious to kiss away.

While Lady Bellenden was thus enjoying herself in the bosom of that domestic retirement so exclusively granted by Heaven to the inhabitants of this country, Sir James Clavering, having finished his lobster-salad, was driving Captain Desborough to the —— Hell.

There, as he particularly hated gambling, the amiable baronet lost four hundred pounds with the greatest satisfaction in the world. He went home at six o'clock in excellent humour, and discharged, or threatened to discharge, his valet for having had the impertinence to fall asleep while his master was being so well entertained.

CHAPTER VIII.

(Supplementary.)

GREVILLE CONTINUED. 1829. ÆT. 26.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

THERE is one great comfort attendant on going to bed at six: one need not get up till two. By this means one glides over the morning without any very considerable difficulty.

Sir James Milner Clavering rose, then, at two, yawned, put his feet into a pair of yellow slippers, dressed, drank his chocolate, and coquetted with a cold chicken and the 'Morning Post.'

His heart swelled with pride when he saw in that immortalising journal his name in the list of attendants at one party, and it sank with regret when he saw not his name in the list of attendants at another.

The mind of Sir James Milner Clavering was not very enlightened or very enlarged, but it was not like that of the celebrated Mr. Courtenay—a sheet of white paper. He was capable of reflection, especially on his own affairs: and, stretching out his right leg which, as the trouser had not yet rolled its graceful waves over the severer empire of the drawers, he saw in its fair proportions, he observed with a pensive sigh that it had grown considerably more attenuated than it was six months ago. Under the influence of that observation, he indulged himself in the following soliloquy:

'It is all very pleasant work, this London life, for a short time. But the morning part of it is a little dull. My headache, too, is worse to-day than it was yesterday—very odd that. Chorlton—Chorlton—a bottle of soda-water! I must say, one gets deuced bad breakfasts in town, and I have quite lost my appetite. How devilish thin my leg does look! It is lucky enough that one can wear nothing but trousers. By-the-by, I must go to Burghost about those things he

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sent home. Chorlton, have they sent the books from the Library yet?'

'Yes, sir, here they are.'

'That's right, give them to me.'

Sir James tossed over three new novels, two upon English life and one upon Irish History.

'Dull stuff this!' resumed the soliloquist. 'I wonder why novels are called light reading. What's this? "The Disowned"—all metaphysics, and virtue, and stuff; and this, all throat-cutting, carbonadoing, and wild Irish, without a glossary. Not sorry I have no property in Ireland. By Jove, that puts me in mind of Rackem's letter; it must be answered to-day. I wonder whether Greville *would* like to have that slip of land. It adjoins his park pales. It would be but civil to offer it to him, but, Gad, I quite dread calling on him. It is not pleasant to subject oneself to an impertinent reception. Shall I call to-day? No, faith, Desborough is coming here presently, and I may as well drive him out in the cab. Devilish good fellow that Desborough, but I can't say much for his mare. Don't wonder Greville would not raffle for it. Certainly I am the best-natured fellow in the world. By Jove, a knock at the door. Desborough, I suppose. Chorlton, my grey trousers.'

The meditations of the morning were now abruptly terminated by the entrance of the worthy Captain.

'How d'ye do, Clavering? You look pale this morning, my good fellow. Not used to nightwork as yet. All in good time. What, reading? anything new? Ah! never read anything myself. One has too much to do in town—take down half-a-dozen novels when I go to the moors—so much wet weather there. By-the-by, you have no property in Scotland, I think?'

'None, but I think of hiring some moors.'

'Capital plan! for Heaven's sake do. Nothing like it. I'll go with you myself, that you may not be bored. Now I think of it, Lord Bellenden has a place in the Highlands to let, Glen something; you may shoot over seventy miles a day.'

'God forbid!' cried Clavering.

'Bah! nothing when you are used to it. Come, are you nearly ready? I want you to walk with me as far as Waterloo Place.'

'Stop a moment, my dear fellow, don't hurry me,—there, that's done. Now I am at your service. Where do you dine to-day?'

'Oh, wherever you like.'

'At the Clarendon then with me.'

'Ah! it's a shame to sponge on you every day, but you're such a d—d rich fellow.'

'Not if I lose four hundred pounds a night.'

'Don't talk of it. Shocking, wasn't it?'

Engaged in this luminous conversation the friends quitted the house, and slowly sauntered towards Waterloo Place.

Clavering lived in New Norfolk Street, and the walk, therefore, was no bad preparative for the Scottish moors. They passed through Brook Street, street of dowagers and hotels, and by dint of perseverance gained the straits of Bond Street.

'Look,' said Desborough softly, 'look on the opposite side of the way; there is Greville.'

The excellent baronet had long felt an ardent curiosity to see the personage so called. He turned his eyes eagerly to the spot indicated by his friend, and he saw a man walking by himself and very slowly. The man's gait was very peculiar. He walked with his hands behind him, looked down on the ground, stooped a good deal, but not as if it were an habitual position, and seemed to be talking to himself. Sir James Milner Clavering felt quite disappointed; he had heard wonders of Greville's impertinence, affectation, and eccentricity; and he had sufficient penetration to discover that Greville was dreaded in proportion to the abuse he received, and listened to in proportion as he differed from other people. Sir James had expected to see a person beautifully though rather showily dressed, with an upright air, an indolent mien, a lofty eye, an unimpeachable neckcloth, and a lip that, like Mr. T. J.'s, said, 'Who are you?' to everyone.

Nothing could be more different from the living Greville than this *beau-idéal* of him. He was dressed not only plainly but badly. His mien and his walk were utterly divested of anything like pride and pretension. He did not carry his chin in the air, like Colonel F.: nor did he inter his right hand in his coat-pocket, like Lord B., nor did he walk with a glass at his eye, like Mr. C.: nor did he think it good taste to make his trousers enter into a flirtation with a handwhip, as Sir R. is pleased touchingly to do: nor did he walk, like Mr. V., with his eyes fixed on one spot, like cannon on a fort, as if he saw nobody on either side of him: nor did he walk, like Viscount C., with a perpetual fountain of smiles bubbling up over his mouth, emanations from the vast reservoir of lead within the brain. In short, he walked very carelessly and very easily, just as if he had been walking in his own gardens or his own library;

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and if there was any affectation in the abstraction and quiet of his air and movements, it was the affectation of not thinking a whit about other people, instead of thinking what a prodigious impression he ought to make upon them.

Certainly there might be something artificial in this, and people in general said there was. We shall see hereafter whether they were right or not.

Nevertheless, despite of the carelessness of his dress and the simplicity of his manner, there was something irresistibly striking and *distingué* about Clare Greville. There was even, according to Mr. Brummell's opinion, too much of the remarkable in his appearance, for few passed him without pausing to look again—a circumstance which the ingenious speculator upon manners and inventor of starch used to consider a sign of great criminality in the garb or gait of the person thus regarded.

'Well, Clavering, what think you of Mr. Greville?' said the Captain.

'Why, I am greatly surprised. He is not at all the sort of person I expected to see; he looks more like a busy member of Parliament than the man I imagined him to be.'

'Just so. I am sure I don't know what he gives himself such airs for.'

Clavering did not answer. The pair arrived in Waterloo Place without any further conversation. They entered that great street which we erected because we won a great battle. It is a pity we did not make both the blessings of the street and the benefits of the peace more substantial when we were about it.

What odd shapes patriotism takes! Some place it in long rows of bricks and mortar ranged upon ground measured by Mr. Nash: some place it in drinking bad wine at the 'Crown and Anchor:' some in thinking Buckingham Palace a great building: some in thinking Sir Thomas Lethbridge a great man. Mr. Hume places it in refusing to pay two guineas a year in order to have his letters at breakfast: George III. placed it in encoring 'God save the King:' Lord —— in procuring votes for building the ugliest churches in the world, and Lord Durham in possessing the worst collection of pictures in Europe.

Our friends looked on the United Service Club and the shell of the new Athenæum. They talked of Mr. Nash and his friendship for Mr. Edwards—touching record of affection! They talked of the great dome which Mr. Nash meant to be invisible, and the wings which

he meant to be handsome. They animadverted on the stone which he spoilt, and the ground-rent he improved. Alas, it is all that he did improve! And they lamented, with tears in their eyes, that a man so amiable and fond of his friends should be addicted to make mistakes in the feet, so providentially fortunate to the receipt of the hands.

They stopped at Mr. Graham's, the upholsterer. It is the pleasantest place in the world for a man who likes furniture. Captain Desborough had just bought a house, without money, and he was going to furnish it suitably.

'Tis a common trick that, with men who have a large acquaintance. They take a house, they furnish it, they sell it to a young friend just come to town. It is the prettiest thing in the world, complete *cap à pie*, not a screw forgot, save the screw of a tradesman. If they marry a fortune, perhaps they ultimately pay. If they don't, there have been cases where they have retired to the Bench. After a short retirement in that abode of virtuous misfortune they prove, like Mr. J—s, that they have been horsedealers, or, like Lady L., that they have been housebuilders, and they return to the world, like Lady L., the more brilliant than ever from their confinement.

Our friends walked over the warehouse of Mr. Graham, and talked about curtains, and buhl, and cornices, and glass. I myself could talk on these subjects for ever. And Mr. Graham having promised that all should be ready in three weeks for the Captain's reception (in three weeks the Captain expected a young cousin, a lord 'up from grass'), the gentlemen walked out again.

They paused at the Athenæum. The Captain was not a learned man, neither was Sir James. What of that? The Captain's grandfather had sailed round the world, and Sir James was going to start for his county. Such claims to notice, literary bodies rarely neglect.

It is a charming place that Athenæum. The people are so well informed; 'tis a pity that they don't know each other. And so very entertaining, 'tis a pity they never converse.

Our friends read the 'Morning Journal' and the old 'Times,' and they wondered how there came to be two opinions on matters which each of the journalists declared to be so exceptionally clear. They then yawned, and drank two bottles of soda-water, walked out of the Club, and returned to Sir James Clavering's abode. There they entered the amiable Baronet's cabriolet, and drove to the Park.

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In that exquisite scene they talked again over the same matters they had talked over before.

'Tis with wise talkers as with country stage-players: the same three ideas which did duty in one scene for Highlanders, do duty for Turks in the next. Nevertheless it is astonishing what a vast quantity of work three ideas properly managed can effect. Their possessors often remind me of the good bishop in the tower who walked up and down his cell (four feet by five) till he had measured the whole circumference of the earth.

CHAPTER IX.

(*Supplementary.*)

GREVILLE CONTINUED. 1829. ÆT. 26.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

CHAP. IX.

ÆT. 26

ALL the misery and all the guilt that have marred the natural order of this beautiful world have had but one cause—*Ennui*.

That he might not be bored at Macedon, Alexander cut the throats of the Persians. Bored by a few hundred patricians and their wives at Rome, Cæsar was driven to amuse himself by destroying two millions elsewhere. Rather too great a sacrifice to the spleen of a worn-out debauchee. The irruptions of the Goths, the expeditions of the Crusaders, the *Auto-da-fés* of the Inquisition, were all so many shifts *pour se désennuyer*. People don't commit such violent excesses when they are well-informed as when they are ignorant, because ignorance is more easily bored than knowledge. Nevertheless, Wisdom herself yawns now and then. At these moments let her beware, she is very near Vice! Oh! could we escape being bored, we should have no reason to despair of perfectibility.

Sir James Milner Clavering was exceedingly subject to the vapours. A good dinner and the agreeable converse of Captain Desborough enlivened him considerably; and, if he had gone home and read 'Yes and No' (I speak from experience), he might have completed the evening with something like a cheerful satisfaction. However, the amusement of that night was otherwise ordained, and he accompanied his friend to the house of Lady Milsom.

That lady was young and pretty; she was also inclined to be blue, and piqued herself on making her *salon* a resort for all the *beaux esprits*. Not that I mean to say one ever met any really clever people there. No! all her *beaux esprits* were persons of repute who had villas at Twickenham or galleries of pictures. They

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did not possess a great deal of knowledge, but they possessed a great many books beautifully bound. Some of them had paraphrased Goethe; others had translated Petrarch; some wrote nice little—*very* little—historical sketches; others shone forth in the dignity of a tour and a quarto. Some talked in tropes, and were called eloquent; others in puns, and were styled witty. But all of them were lions of the drawing-room; their teeth, if not drawn, were exceedingly white; and their claws, if not cut, were concealed in kid gloves.

Lady Milsom looked enchantingly handsome, and talked with the prettiest smile imaginable about the 'nice book upon Locke' which Lord King was going to publish. Sir James Clavering joined her and her party. Having been at Oxford and at Eton, the amiable young man was considered more versed in the elegancies of literature than in its profundities. In compliment to him the conversation turned upon poetry. It was universally agreed that nothing in verse was so odious as smoothness; the great characteristic of a true poet was to be as rugged as possible. Nothing could be clearer than this; for as no one now could assert that Pope was a poet, so to be unlike Pope was instantly to become a poet.

Lord Dithyramboiolos expressed great indignation at that 'venomous versifier' who had libelled so atrociously the really great bards of his day. He expatiated on the injustice of time, which had favoured the satirist and swallowed those wonderful men.

'What would we not give,' he cried, 'for the labours of those divine poets, of whom the insipid rhymer, little conscious of the praises he was bestowing, has said—

> Their muses on their racks
> Scream like the winding of ten thousand jacks!

Ah! if we had such poets now, they would no longer complain of the injustice of contemporary criticism.'

The enthusiasm of the speaker circled among the audience: and Mr. Polypous, who had published a poem, though nobody knew it, in what he was pleased to term the Spenserian stanza, declared in a prophetic rapture that, if poetry made but one more stride, he did not doubt but that he should live to see the day when verses exquisitely floating on the waves of the soul would defy the efforts of Mr. Thelwall himself to breathe them on the ear. Poetry would indeed be poetry directly it became impossible to read it. This sublime opinion produced a visible effect, and Mr. Polypous forthwith wrote an 'Ode to Mary' in Lady Milsom's album, as a foretaste of the bliss in store for the future lovers of harmony.

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Lord Milsom, who was a man without any soul, observed that he thought that, as *none* of the verses could be scanned, it was rather too bold an innovation to make *all at once* upon popular prejudice. Mr. Polypous, however, justly and learnedly defended himself. He asserted that his style was no innovation, it was a revival of the style of older poets. The immortal Lydgate himself had boasted that

> His verse was wrong,
> As being some too short and some too long.

Thereupon Lord Milsom was silenced, and Mr. Polypous was congratulated by the best judges on his successful rivalry with the immortal Lydgate.

The best of Sir James Milner Clavering was that, if he was not very brilliant, he did not wish to be thought so. Accordingly, he moved away from this learned coterie as soon as he was able. He turned and saw in a corner of the room, apart from the rest of the world, Lady Bellenden seated next to a gentleman, with whom she appeared earnestly conversing. Clavering paused, looked twice, and in the gentleman he recognised Greville.

The survey of that autocrat of manners with which he now indulged himself disappointed him, on the whole, less than the first view of the morning. Yet still he could not but confess that the attractions of the person before him fell far short of the partiality of general report.

In age Clare Greville was about five-and-twenty, but he looked considerably younger. In person he was inclined to be tall, and seemed strongly yet not heavily built. His features were finely but severely formed, and suited well with the bold, firm, classic contour of his countenance. But they lost the pleasing effect they should have derived from their symmetry, by an expression which his friends called thought and his enemies pride, and which probably was neither one nor the other. It was certainly not the latter; never was there a man less proud than Clare Greville. Added to this not prepossessing expression of face, his complexion wanted richness, and the extreme shortness of his hair, which was straight and of a reddish colour, joined to the absence of those appendages once so cherished by the cheeks of our present Majesty—Heaven bless him!—and still considered no despicable ornament to masculine attraction, took away from that luxuriance of manhood characteristic of the prime of life; utterly depriving him of all claim to the poetic part of beauty, or the admiration of Mr. Truefit. Still, to one who

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had looked with a curious eye upon the remains of ancient art there was something impressive and even noble in the bend of his head, the shape of the profile, the undulating grace of every gesture and position, and the extreme yet commanding simplicity which was the chief characteristic of his face, form, and air.

Contrary to the negligence of costume which had so displeased Clavering in the morning, the dress of Mr. Greville was now, if not better, at least not worse than that of any other pretender to the fine art of appearing to the best advantage: and it seemed fitting to his peculiar character of person as well as mind to avoid rather than incur the littleness and affectation of disdaining the small means which are so frequently the stepping-stones to a great end.

Whatever might be the commune between Lady Bellenden and Mr. Greville, it seemed to receive no welcome addition from the company of Lady Milsom and three or four attendant satellites. Sweeping up to the confabulists with some wonderful treasure which would have made the heart of the accomplished and excellent Mrs. Pettigrew a house of joy, these persons now turned the monopoly of the conversation into a traffic of general advantage. There are other *companies* where such changes are not so easily effected—would they were!

Clavering joined the group. At the time he did so, conversation had glided from the commonplace of letters into that of custom.

'You are going to Lord ——'s races, Mr. Greville?' said Lady Milsom.

'Do any gentlemen not of the Royal family ever go to races twice?' said Greville gravely.[1]

'Dear, how droll!' said Mrs. Holroyd. 'Why everybody goes to races.'

'Indeed! I live so much out of the world that your intelligence astonishes me. I thought it used to be considered *mauvais ton* to make one of a mob.'

'Ha, ha!' laughed Lady Milsom, who, more sensible than her guests, knew that Greville never said anything which seemed silly without flattering himself that he couched beneath it something which he thought rational.

'So you think races *mauvais ton*. Explain why.'

'With great pleasure. Remember, I am merely speaking of the conventional laws of good taste. There is one abstract law better

[1] 'Do gentlemen hunt twice?'—Lord Chesterfield.

than all, viz. one's own pleasure. The most real good taste is for a man to consult his own pleasure, so long as he thinks it reasonable, without caring whether it be *bon ton* or not. But since you won't allow that, I speak only with reference to the laws you do allow—to those charming little affectations which you have bound up together as the code of the *élite*, or, as common people say, the exclusives. Now what is so low as a crowd? Directly you make one of a mob you literally lose your identity, you are merely a part of the multitude, you have the same feelings as Giles the butcher and Hobbes the cobbler. There is no difference between a mob at Epsom and a mob at St. Giles's; the same vulgar feelings agitate each—mirth, anxiety, uproar, riot. You might as well make a noise at the ducking of a pickpocket as at the victory of Mameluke. I will give you a proof of the levelling nature of a crowd. You know what a stiff person is our friend Lord Armadilleros; you know there are not three persons in England who dare introduce their sons to him. Well, at Ascot last year, Lord Armadilleros was accidentally next to Mr. Bob, usually termed The White; both had bet on the same horse—both were stretching to see if it won. It did win, and the event opened the hearts and mouths of both worthies, and Lord Armadilleros and Mr. White Bob turned round and grinned amicably in each other's faces like a couple of Dresden jars. It did my heart good to see them.'

'But, my dear Mr. Greville,' said Mrs. Holroyd, 'that may be all very shocking, and very true, for people who care about races and so forth, but for my part I only go to see the people, not the horses.'

'Oh, my dear Mrs. Holroyd, for God's sake don't say so! I can't believe you actuated by a motive so excessively *encanaillé*. What! *you* swayed by the most vulgar of all desires—the desire of sight-seeing—the same desire which carries Mrs. Simkins to Sadler's Wells, and the little Simkiniculi to Bartholomew Fair? What! you, the fastidious, the refined, the oracular Mrs. Holroyd, undergo a long journey—(how far is it to Epsom and Ascot?)—for the sole purpose of gaping—pardon the word—at a string of carriages? My dear Mrs. Holroyd, the next time my little cousins come to town, do oblige me, and yourself, by taking them to the Lord Mayor's procession. You can see finer carriages there without the trouble of going out of town for it.'

'Really, Mr. Greville,' gasped forth Mrs. Holroyd—she could no more.

'No,' resumed Greville, 'I cannot believe it. I think better of

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Mrs. Holroyd than she reports of herself. For persons who bet, for persons who run horses, there is some excuse. Our birth, our *usage du meilleur monde*, do not exempt us from liking to make, or being sorry to lose, a little money now and then. The patrician amusement of the gambling throws a sort of halo over the levelling tendency of the crowd; and races are only not the lowest of assemblies to people who go there with the intention of cheating—that is the ambition of our younger brothers,—or the predestiny of being cheated—alas, that is the nobler fate of our eldest.'

'But, my dear Mr. Greville,' said Lady Milsom, 'if crowds are so indecorous, you must object even to routs, and anathematise balls.'

'Exactly so; your large parties it is scarcely possible for any-one endowed with the least delicacy of feeling to attend. But they are one degree better than races, they are so perfectly insipid. A sublime passiveness, a waveless, breezeless stagnation of mind is the especial characteristic of the well-bred. Hence, routs are not irredeemable, and balls not absolutely criminal. Nevertheless, for my own part, an unhappy and morbid sensitiveness of nerves rarely suffers me to attend those parties of pain. My dear Mrs. Holroyd, you see now why I was unable to attend yours last night.'

Mrs. Holroyd longed to say something impertinent. Her intentions were better than her abilities, and she contented herself with a scornful laugh.

'I was exceedingly amused,' said Greville, 'by hearing that a Lord somebody, a person of very bad family (his father having been a clever man who obtained a peerage by genius: nothing, you know, is so disgraceful as that), had said that it was a little presumptuous in me to set up laws for the world when *he* had never met me anywhere. *I* set up laws for the world—*I*, a poor recluse, a hermit, who only make excuses for not sharing the pomps and the pleasures of my kind—*I* set up laws! That is pleasant, is it not? And where should Lord somebody meet me? I don't often go to Almack's, and never to the Bear Garden.'

'But, Mr. Greville,' said Lady Bellenden, 'you do not remember that things bad in themselves are made good by custom. It is surely bad taste to fly against opinion. If you are in the world, you must live as people do in the world.'

'Charming Lady Bellenden, you speak with your usual wisdom. Your maxims correspond exactly with my own. I quarrel with you, not for wishing to live like other people, but for wishing not

to live like other people, and, after considerable trouble, failing in the attempt. I, whom you blame as eccentric, am the only commonplace person among you. My life, I allow it, is like the lives of persons who live at Lambeth, or who breathe empyreal air in the regions of Bloomsbury.'

'Nay, now you speak ironically; answer me seriously. By the world I mean one's own world, the people one lives with, whether one lives in one quarter or another, with this set or that. I suppose people who live in Bloomsbury like to do as *their* friends do. We who live elsewhere must do the same. You smile. Answer me, seriously mind, at least with what is seriousness in you.'

'Well then, seriously. I think the great source of that extreme vulgarity spread over what is termed "good society"—which all of us who have witnessed it confess, and which all who have not witnessed it admire—I think one great source of it in this country may be found in the very observation you have just made, "We must live like other people!" The eternal root of *mauvais ton* is IMITATION. Fondly, my dear Lady Bellenden, did I once hope that this imitation was the characteristic solely of the small unknown. With them I allow it is unpleasantly prominent; and, with the exception of my friend Mr. Hopkins in Bloomsbury—a charming person, Mrs. Holroyd, and the most consummate gentleman of my acquaintance—I must introduce you to him one of these days, but it's a great favour, remember—with the exception of Mr. Hopkins and his family, I know few people out of the *mode* who are much better bred than the people in it. But this perpetual imitation, this evergreen terror of Mrs. Grundy, is found to grow as much in one square as another, as much in Lady Milsom's drawing-room as in the back-parlour of Lady Milsom's couturier. Nobody, not the bright particular star in your world, dear Lady Bellenden, makes that great difference between one nobleman and another that is made among you. With them a Lord is a Lord. What can he be more? But you make a hundred nice grades and shades, and one of the lower grade is always striving to get into an upper one. How does he strive to do it? By imitation. One copies another, he in his turn copies a third, the third copies the fourth, and the world, *your* world, becomes nothing more than a great game at follow the leader. It is not difficult, my dear Mrs. Holroyd, to see why this makes all of you so vulgar. I use a *vulgar* word, but no other conveys what I mean. If you are always imitating, you can never be at your ease. Without ease no manner can be well-bred; that is a

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small part of the evil. Imitation produces a worse evil than want of ease. That evil is a want of independence. You are never "secure in your existence." You have recourse to a thousand little mean arts in order to be as much as possible like Mr. that, or Lady this. All these little mean arts are easily discovered. You become ridiculous; and, what is worse, you are unconscious of it. There is a child's play called school (by-the-by all English schools are child's play). One urchin assumes the schoolmaster, another the usher, the rest are the boys. My dear Mrs. Holroyd, this is the game your little great world are always playing. You sit on high stools of complacency as the schoolmaster and the ushers: but, while you think to overawe the rest, they have pinned your own foolscaps to your back, and the most amusing part of the spectacle is the solemn state of unsuspicious ridicule in which you are enthroned.'

'You don't keep your promise of answering me seriously,' said Lady Bellenden.

'Pardon me, I have kept it. But confess at all events that I have answered you truly. I will let you into another secret of your state. You know as well as I do that, if there be one word more eschewed by persons of refinement, by Society in short, than another, it is "fashion" or "fashionable." No phrase rouses all one's nerves into so preternatural a state of horror as "a man of fashion," "people of fashion," "quite the fashion," "all the fashion." Even while I quote these phrases I read in your eyes the pain I occasion—"And my frame trembles while my tongue relates." Why is this? You think it is because of the common mouths from which such verbal atrocities issue. Not at all. It is the thing itself which is so *mauvais*; it is not the word, but the thing which the word conjures, that vibrates so thrillingly along your system. It is the FASHION itself—the fashion which, under other names or epithets, you worship—the fashion itself which is vulgar. The idea of courting some people and being rude to others, the idea of confining yourself perforce to a set that bores you, the idea of being made by your acquaintance, or your dinners, or your diamonds,—this is the idea from which you all recoil directly it is presented to you from a vulgar mouth in a vulgar word.'

'Upon my word, Mr. Greville, you are excruciatingly severe,' said Mrs. Holroyd. 'I suppose you think the Duke of —— has bad taste.'

'Ah, let us avoid personalities, my dear Mrs. Holroyd. It is so easy to attack persons, some think it so easy to praise them.'

'No,' said Lady Bellenden, 'I know that Mr. Greville does think the Duke of —— has the true tastes of a grand seigneur, and he especially admires him for giving to the parade of his retinue so great a personal simplicity.'

'True, Lady Bellenden, yet see how easily you spoil things, how easily you turn good taste into bad, by your eternal imitation. The Duke of —— never obtrudes his rank on you; and Lord —— puts his under lock and key. To display one's coronet ostentatiously is very justly thought condemnatory; Lord —— accordingly puts his in some part of his carriage where it is invisible. One ought to be ashamed of nothing one has, not even one's rank. It is as *mauvais ton* for one man to seem ashamed of being an earl, as for another to seem ashamed of being a linendraper. But you are all incorrigible, it is impossible to mend you.'

'Why?' said Lady Bellenden, laughing.

'Because a numerous aristocracy is always ill-bred. It must be so; and every new peerage adds a river to the ocean of your vulgarities. You cannot be cured as a body, but some individuals may be ameliorated.'

'How?'

'By thinking more of your own rank than about that of other people. This seems a very easy recipe; one can scarcely esteem it a difficult task to learn self-conceit. Yet with you it is difficult, so far as rank is concerned.'

'Is it your self-conceit that makes you so well-bred?' said Lady Milsom, laughing.

'Upon my honour I believe it is,' answered Greville, rising. 'But you know I am not one of your world. I am to retire to my Hermitage.'

'Adieu, *mon ours*,' said Lady Bellenden.

'Pardon me, dearest Lady Bellenden, it is you, the world, the fine world, who are the bears: and the thing common people call Fashion is the monkey which rides you.'

CHAPTER X.

(Supplementary.)

GREVILLE CONTINUED. 1829. ÆT. 26.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

BOOK VIII. 1830-32

GREVILLE'S carriage stopped at the door of a house in the upper part of Piccadilly; a large house for London, which is only a city of cottages. It was Greville's home. Through a hall where the light shone on rows of statues and vases of flowers, Greville passed to his favourite apartment. It was the most spacious room in the house, for there was what may be termed '*a largeness*' in all Greville's tastes and habits. He had very few prettinesses of mind: he was not fond of small villas, or cabinet pictures, or books of sonnets, or very little women, or gardens of half an acre. His inclinations were quite opposed to the inclinations of those numerous good people who think smallness the greatest ingredient of elegance.

The furniture of the room corresponded with its extent; it was large, rich, costly, and for the most part what is termed ancient furniture. There was a great profusion of ornaments scattered around, but it was chiefly of a simple or a massive description; groups in bronze, gigantic candelabras of ormoulu, cabinets of ebony, tables of marble supporting immense vases rather than diminutive treasures of the gorgeous Sèvres or the ruder Dresden, gave the character to the apartment. On one side, the room opened to a small *salle à manger*, on the other to a library of great value to sensible men, and of indifferent price to the eyes of antiquarians.

If Greville had few prettinesses of mind, he had at least two *effeminacies*, if we may use such a word, of taste. He was exceedingly fond of perfumes, and scarcely less so of light. The rooms he inhabited were always at night as much lit up as would have sufficed for an ordinary number of friends, and were as invariably redolent

of rare flowers, or the spirits of undying odours. These luxuries seldom failed to produce in him what others fly to battle, to hells, to love, to the bowl—as Lord Byron used to call Carbonell's green bottles—to find in a greater degree, viz. intoxication: for excitement is but drunkenness with a finer name. And though both these tastes are considered in modern times effeminate, yet they might perhaps be pardoned to a man rarely intoxicated by vanity, never by wine, and reduced therefore to some sort of substitute, which he found not in smoking, nor in snuff.

On entering his room Greville threw himself on a sofa, wheeled round a small table, took up a book, and appeared to busy himself in reading. But his thoughts were away from his task; and, like Sir James Milner Clavering, he indulged himself in soliloquy.

'Was not Parmenides right,' thought he, 'when that wise man of Elis said there are only two kinds of philosophy; one founded on reason, the other on opinion? Alas! there are few disciples of the former, and all London is a school for the latter. 'Tis rare fooling, this life. Would I could get out of it! But whither can I fly? Ay, there's the rub; I share the same fate as those whom I satirise. Everywhere monotony stretches around me like a wall. Fly where I will, I meet the same mimicry of all that is dull without being grand, and pert without being easy. We are like the criminals of the Roman Empire, of whom the historian so eloquently asks, "Where can they escape? There is no country beyond; the whole world is Roman!" Of all fortunes I envy most that of Bonnet, the French adventurer. He left his country, travelled, and became a king over savages. There was, indeed, a leap from this vast morass of sociality, this Salisbury Plain of civilisation; in which the only relief is a few elevations, ancient, barren, and stony, which seem always tottering, and which never fall. But what matter our mere ordinary, daily changes? What boots it to change from London to Paris, from Paris to Rome, from Rome to Vienna? The gigantic empire of custom, a custom varying only in minutiæ—the same sublime, immovable BORE, in its great features—arrests, chills, petrifies us wherever we go. Shall I grow accustomed to this heavy air at last? or shall I turn desperate and sail round the world with Captain Parry? Had I but one feeling to ally itself to the desire of variety, the North Pole should receive me. But there is a wonderful *vis inertiæ* in money, youth, independence, and indolence all united; which requires some strong impulse, such as vanity or ambition, to urge it into motion. Would I were either vain or ambitious! I look

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on the world, laugh at it, and stir not a jot for it, from it, or against it. Be it so. Perhaps this is real wisdom: let us see what the sage says to the contrary,' and Greville shifted his posture and rivetted his attention to his book.

Meanwhile, let us enter his heart and dissect his character.

An only son and an orphan, Clare Greville was very early thrown upon the world. He had profited deeply by his experience; few men knew human nature better; he had travelled much, he had observed much, he had read much, and he had thought much. At the age of twenty-five his mind was that of a man of fifty. He was himself accustomed to say, though with more point than wisdom, that he was twenty years too old for his own happiness. Before he was seventeen he had travelled over the greater part of England and Scotland alone and on foot; and perhaps it was in those wanderings that he had acquired his keenness of remark and the singular independence of his character. Many and strange were the adventures which, from his occasional confidences of the past, he appeared to have gone through. He had herded with strolling players, and kept tent with the Egyptians. Some story there was of his being once taken with a set of gentlemen of the road, and saved from durance only by an accidental recognition; but this was in all probability a vague and groundless fabrication, and had no other basis than the somewhat too vivid gusto with which he was wont to portray the habits of those personages, and the suspiciously accurate knowledge he seemed to possess of their customs and their haunts.

Putting aside exaggeration, it was clear that he had seen closely, and examined minutely, the manners and lives of the very lowest order of men; and that the fastidiousness for which he was noted in the more courtly grades of society had not prevented his researches in those nooks and corners of human kind from which even the mildest refinement is supposed so painfully to shrink.

Perhaps, in other and better scenes, adventures which came more readily home to his heart, and shed a more ineradicable dye over his nature, had occurred to him: for rarely, in those combining so many advantages as Clare Greville, does experience bring indifference to the world's object, and satire on the world's prizes, without being coupled with sorrow—and with that sorrow which is born of the affections. The reader will remember the sentence in Rousseau—it is one of those beautiful truths which express volumes in a phrase—'*une grande passion malheureuse est un grand moyen de sagesse.*'

Greville had appeared in the world of London at the ordinary age, viz. about two-and-twenty; but with what advantages, so far as experience is concerned, over his cotemporaries! He possessed a strong and inexhaustible fund of keen, solid, unvitiated sense; and this showed him society at once, and in its true colours. Unlike most *débutants*, he saw, without preparative or ordeal, that the materials of the great kaleidoscope were but tatters of rag and atoms of glass: and, not having been nurtured in prejudice till it grew like truth, it was quite enough for him to see the meanness, the trouble, the bustle, the heat, the coarseness of *la vie du monde anglais*, *cette vie qui se passe sur l'escalier*, in order to despise them.

He never dreamt for a moment of copying what he disdained. He rested solely on his own independence: and, while everybody, seeing him differ from themselves, cried out that he was the most artificial of human beings, the real fact was that he was the only natural person among them. It was indeed out of the order of things for Clare Greville not to be natural. If he had little vanity and less ambition, he had a store of lofty self-conceit; and he would no more have taken the trouble to put himself out of the way in order to flatter foibles or mimic defects, than others would have followed their own opinion in opposition to that of Lady —— or the Duke of ——. He stood in the world—the fine world, I mean—perfectly detached, alone, and self-supported. Ordinary bribes and common intimidations had no effect whatsoever upon him. He cared not three straws if he was asked to one house or excluded from another. On the contrary, he very frankly confessed that he found few houses so pleasant as his own, and that he considered it rather a favour to leave it for any other. Perfectly independent by birth and fortune, he was equally so by character. Nobody in the world could have obliged Clare Greville, nobody could oppress him.

It was said that he was rude or civil, according to art and premeditated design. Nothing could be more untrue. He was a great deal too natural for any premeditation upon matters he thought so utterly insignificant as those which seemed to society so important. He was a person who felt contempt strongly; it was one of the passions with him, the more so perhaps that he felt not hatred, and was utterly impregnable to revenge. When he felt contempt he was at little pains to conceal it. Hence his reputation for impertinence, the only reputation he enjoyed which he really deserved. But it was observed that he was never insolent to his inferiors, never to the bashful, never to *unpretending* insignificance, never to

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real merit. It was chiefly to fine people, and demi-fine people, that he reserved all the stings of his satire and the *brusquerie* of his impertinence. It was not true, as Lady Milsom said, that he was only ceremoniously insolent; he was sometimes, though rarely unceremoniously so, to people of the species I have described.

All Lady Mushrooms who talked of 'patronising' other Lady Mushrooms and ridiculed Bloomsbury Square; all political impostors who affected principles which they never felt and theories which they never practised, who got rid of all truths by saying that truth varies, and of all consistency by saying men should vary with it; all promising young men who prated on the Constitution and took extracts from Delolme; all dandies who pinned faith only to the apostles of White's, hope only to the promise of a patroness, and charity only to the vices that flourish on the right side of Oxford Street; Honourable Misters and Mistresses who talked of *the* Duke and who made it a point to live in Mayfair; all and each of these had to Clare Greville a sort of instinctive aversion. And, like all instincts, the aversion was equitable and prudent.

I need not say, then, that Greville was by no means a popular man: but the reasons which made him unpopular made him also universally courted. Invitations besieged his door, cards covered his table. You would have thought people adored, they were so eager to see, him. He went out capriciously; for he went out just when it pleased him, and that was not very often. This circumstance made him tenfold more *recherché*, because it prevented his being too *generally* the rage. His eccentricities of opinion made you remember him, and you met him so rarely that you were not tired of the eccentricity. The people who liked him best were those like Lady Bellenden or Lady Milsom. Too high for fear, it was refreshing to those whom everybody courted to be blamed now and then: and nobody in the Temple of Fashion ridicules the superstitious so much as the priests do.

If he had many enemies, Clare Greville was not without a few friends. He was not habitually intimate with anyone. You rarely saw him walking or riding in company with another. But there were some, perhaps, who loved him the more for not being perpetually with him: and, in the hackneyed phrase, those persons would have gone through fire and water for his sake.

This devoted attachment which he was able to inspire might have many sources; persons, like authors, who have the fewest admirers, are often the most ardently admired. But the principal

source of the attachment was probably the extraordinary confidence and unlimited trust which anyone once admitted to his friendship felt that he might repose in him. There were many men of whom you would sooner have asked a trifling favour—the loan of a horse, or the use of a carriage. There were none to whom you would so fearlessly have proffered a great request—you were certain that interest could not warp, that opinion could not deter him, that fear could not intimidate him. You were certain, too, of the iron resolution, partaking of obstinacy, which made a part of his character. The whole world could not have torn him, nor allured him, nor laughed him, from your side. Besides this you might feel sure that however great the benefit he conferred on you, it would not sit for ever upon his memory. He thought as little of favours conferred as of injuries received, and as he was unsusceptible of revenge, so he was unexacting of gratitude.

All this perhaps arose from his want of vanity. He had both the virtues and the failings which belong to that want. He would never have been so galling had he been vain. Vain people have the feelings so keen, that sympathy makes them alive to the feelings of others. Vain people are nearly always courteous: and, when they are not, it is because vanity makes them bashful. But it never makes them rude. Clare Greville almost unconsciously hurt the feelings (feelings indeed!) of the servile, the silly, the arrogant persons he sneered at, because it would have been impossible for *them* to have hurt *his* feelings. He had no sympathy with them, and this want of sympathy made him *obtuse* to their pangs, as malice would have made some satirists *rejoice* in them.

But it must not be supposed that Greville was merely a rude man, or that his conversation always wore the tone of satire. Perhaps, despite of all his originality—originality, that great spell which can make anyone the mode—he would soon have been left to the unmolested enjoyment of his house in Piccadilly if he had only carried a sting, and never been prodigal of honey. No one could pay compliments so beautifully, or make praise so thrilling. A word, a look, a movement, he could impregnate with a wooing and most winning eloquence. People, again, said all this was systematic artifice. Not at all. Greville was almost as open to admiration as to contempt; and he expressed the former with a deeper earnestness than he ever did the latter. It was a necessary consequence of his great loneliness of mind and concentrated and lofty self-esteem, not to be jealous of others. I question whether Greville ever felt envy

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in his life; he certainly never expressed it. That carping, biting, querulous, mumbling spleen which arises, not from the faults, but the merits, of others, never jaundiced the more generous sarcasm of his censure. On the other hand, there was nothing timid, or qualifying, or niggardly, in his praise; he was perfectly insensible of the Eastern policy of killing one's brothers to secure oneself.

I am not sure whether he could be said to have genius. He had little sentiment and a great deal of hardness in his temperament: this is not the ordinary texture of men of genius. His chief mental qualities were penetration, coolness, and great moral courage. He would never, perhaps, have shone as a man of letters, though he was well-informed, possessed some wit, and had an exquisite taste. He would have wanted the enthusiasm, the gusto, the *chaleur* required to write well. He could never have written verse, nor any species of composition where eloquence and luxuriance, painting or richness, are required. If he could have written anything tolerably, it would have been history. But he would have made an admirable soldier and a still better statesman. And his frame of mind would have exactly suited him to that train of speaking most effective among the wiser part of the English Senate; simple, bold, ready, biting yet courteous, utterly free from flowers, never superfluous, and always possessing more sense than sound.

There was not much probability, however, that Greville would ever prominently come forward in public life. His system was thoroughly saturated with indifference. He wanted nothing but ambition to become a great man: but he was likely always to want that, and always therefore to remain what he was. Unfortunately, too, there was less hope of Greville than there would have been of any other man of his age. His mind was so old—I do not mean the word favourably—that you could scarcely expect it to change much. You could scarcely say of a man who seemed to be so well acquainted with the world, and in his own person to have experienced, buried, and survived such a variety of emotions, 'He is young yet; it is not the time of life for ambition.' You might as well have made the same speech of your grandfather.

Nevertheless as he was tolerably rich, well-born, and esteemed clever, his natural sphere seemed to be public life, and his friends always talked of what 'Clare Greville would do by-and-by.' And Clare Greville was very much obliged to them, and strove unaffectedly to rouse within himself some sort of emulation to deserve the prediction. 'But my mind,' said he quaintly, 'my mind is like a

slothful person: it stretches itself, it turns round: perhaps you think it is going to rise; not at all, it has settled itself the more comfortably to sleep.'

Another reason against the chances of future distinction for Greville was his universality of mind. No one object could be said to have for him a much stronger attraction than another: a proof, perhaps, of his deficiency in genius. Even in his knowledge, which was on all literary matters great, extensive, and well-arranged, there was no topic on which he was much better informed than another. This may be the sign of an accomplished, but it is seldom the prognostic of a great, man. To be great one must limit one's aspirings to one point, and bring all the rays of the mind to a single focus. To the empire of Ambition may be applied the same advice, given by Augustus,* respecting the empire of Rome: *You support its strength by limiting its boundaries.*

* Tacitus, *Annal.* l. 9.

CHAPTER XI.

(*Supplementary.*)

GREVILLE CONTINUED. 1829. ÆT. 26.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

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By Heaven, it is amazing to me what a quantity of truths there are in the world, scattered about in little pieces! For my part, I spend my life picking them up, and I intend when I grow old to ask a certain author, who is a great hand at making books out of other people's thoughts, to cement them all together.

Wherever you see dignity be sure there is money requisite for the support of it.

That is a shrewd truth, and a witty one too, and there are more of the same sort in the place where it came from!* Sir James Milner Clavering aspired to the dignity of being not a great man, but a great gentleman—in a word, to the *succès de société*. Accordingly, leaving Lady Milsom's, he went to the house of Lady Dareville, who was the best écarté player in town. She had particularly asked our excellent young friend to her house, and she now particularly asked him to play at écarté with her.

There was a great deal of dignity in this situation, and it was proportionably expensive. Clavering lost rather more than he had done the night before. Captain Desborough, who came just in time to witness his loss, looked exceedingly angry with him.

It is a heartbreaking sight to see the money one thought oneself certain of, flowing perfidiously into the hands of another.

'My dear Clavering,' quoth the Captain, as Clavering drove him home, 'for Heaven's sake never play with Lady Dareville again. She is notorious. You are really too unsuspicious. I ought to be always by your side. Never play again but when I am with you.'

* *Popular Fallacies*, p. 217—one of the most *amusing* books in the English language. I say nothing about its wisdom, for I want it to be read by people who care more about amusement than wisdom.

'Faith,' thought Clavering, 'you are not always my guardian angel in those matters.'

'Lady Dareville is notorious, I repeat,' continued Desborough in a passion, 'and I believe she keeps spies upon all the hotels in town in order to hear of every man who comes up with a fortune to spend, and the spirit to spend it.'

'Very possible,' said Clavering, yawning.

'I am really now,' said the Captain, 'quite ashamed to request you to lend me a trifle only for one month, which I *did* intend to have asked you for. You are the only fellow in the world I would borrow from, positively the only one, but you have lost so much that——'

'Not at all, my dear Desborough; I shall be delighted to oblige you in any way. Say what you want, and you shall have it to-morrow. My losses are mere bagatelles, I assure you.'

'Well, you are the best-natured fellow in the world. I merely wanted three hundred pounds, and only for one month; but this house of mine costs me so much that I——'

'Not another word. I will send you the draft to-morrow, and never talk of payment till it is quite convenient to you.'

'I am deucedly obliged to you, Clavering,' answered the Captain. 'By-the-by, you must come and see my house. It will be the neatest thing in town when it is finished; invisible doors in all the walls, and such chairs, my dear fellow—you merely touch a spring, and they become sofas in an instant. Famous house for a bachelor.'

'Famous indeed,' said Clavering, who would have given the world for one of the said chairs at that moment, and who could scarcely speak for yawning.

'And looking-glass wherever you turn. But you must see my dressing-room. The wardrobe cost me 600*l*. Have you seen my toilet? It is not in bad taste, is it?'

'Capital taste, indeed.'

'I like having one's dressing things neat and comfortable; and a decent toilet, especially if the work of the basin and ewers correspond (I intend to have my hip-bath of silver), is really a very gentlemanlike thing; and it is especially good taste if one is not bad-looking, you know, Clavering.'

'If one is not bad-looking, as you say,' answered the Baronet.

'But here we are. Good night, my dear Clavering! devilish obliged to you.'

'Hip-bath of silver—grand fellow that Desborough!' thought

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Clavering, driving home. 'And the conceit of the dog; not bad-looking, indeed! What have his looks to do with his hip-bath?'

Our amiable young friend, it is clear, had not discovered the truth of which he himself was an example, viz. 'Wherever you see dignity be sure there is money requisite to support it.'

Captain Desborough could not be that very great person, Captain Desborough, for nothing. But if the Baronet did not discover one truth, he stumbled unwittingly on another, viz. the wonderful difference it makes in your views of a man's character when that cursed money comes in the way.

Captain Desborough was an unimpeachable oracle to Sir James Clavering till Sir James Clavering saw that Captain Desborough had a design on his pocket. But when oracles desire you to address yourself to them in bank notes, you are in a fair way of quarrelling with their inspiration—one reason, by the way, why I look harshly on the divinity of a doctor's prescription.

The next day at breakfast, Sir James Clavering, revolving over the events of the past night, recurred to Greville.

'I envy his impudence,' thought Sir James, 'but after all he is entertaining, and did not seem ill-natured to anyone but that Mrs. Holroyd, who is no very charming person. I have a great mind to call on him to-day, and by Jove I will too! Chorlton, the "Court Guide." Oh, Piccadilly. Send for the cab, Chorlton.'

Fraught with his noble resolution Clavering completed his dress, entered his cabriolet, and drove to Piccadilly. 'After all,' thought he, 'I will merely leave the letter and my card, 'twill save the bore of introducing myself personally.'

While, however, his cabriolet was at the door, and he was speaking to the porter, Greville himself came out. The two gentlemen looked, bowed; and Greville, approaching, glanced at the card in the porter's hand. No sooner did he catch the name than he came forward with great cordiality, and pressed Clavering so warmly to enter the house, that this excellent person, disentangling himself from his cabriolet, accepted the invitation.

'My dear Sir James,' said Greville when they were alone, 'I cannot tell you how glad I am that you allow me to make your acquaintance. Your father I have often heard spoken of in the highest terms by mine, and it will not be my fault if their friendship is not hereditary.'

Clavering replied suitably, and Greville continued—

'I saw you last night at Lady Milsom's, but I was not then

aware of your name. You have not, I think, been long in town.'

'It is my first year.'

'Ah, you are a happy person then. Balls give you pleasure. You can dance, you can dine out, you can even ride in the Park, and not feel a desire to commit suicide during those ravishing employments.'

'No,' answered Clavering, who heard all fine people complain of being *blasé*, just the same as all fine poets complain of being blighted, and who did not wish to be eccentric—'No, I can't say I am very fond of dancing or anything else one does here. *Mais que faire?*'

'Exactly so! that is the eternal question to which there is no answer. Death is a great secret, but life is a greater. I am as much bored as you are: and, like you, I can only say when I am particularly *ennuyé*, '*Mais que faire?*' and so one goes on for ever. How do you like Lady Milsom?'

'Very much; she is "a very nice person."'

'You could not have expressed her character better. She is a very nice person, and is well-bred *insensibly*. Her theories are bad; her practice contradicts them, and is perfect.'

'You don't admire English manners much; I believe you like the French better?'

'Nay, not much. The French begin to study better things than manners, though manners are very well worth study. But there is this difference between the deterioration of French manners and the continued badness of the English. The French are growing a free people, the English are growing a servile one: and the old Bull leaven makes them rude, though it does not prevent their cringing. The basest little thing I know anywhere is a fine English lady who follows the fashion which she cannot set, and fawns on the people she longs to bite. She is a nettle to her inferiors, and a sunflower to her betters!'

'Good heavens, what a libel!'

'True, on my honour. Recollect Mrs. Holroyd and Lady Finelow for instance.'

'Yes, but remember Lady Milsom, Lady Bellenden, Lady Agnes Percivale, a hundred people I could name to you.'

'Ah, but they are not fine ladies, they are really great persons, *dames du Faubourg*. Much too high to be fine, they don't make the mass, you understand. It is only of the mass I speak. But

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what shall you do this morning? I am going to see Lady Agnes Percivale. Do you know her? if so, will you call with me?'

'Nothing I should like better. Shall I drive you there?'

'Why I would rather walk if you have no objection,' said Greville. And Clavering, dismissing his cabriolet, and secretly charmed to find Greville such a much better fellow than he had imagined, agreed to the proposal.

I have said that Clavering was a very well-dressed person. 'Tis the first *belle passion* one has, that love of dress. Ah, how years, and sorrow, and life in the country, and the House of Commons, and sometimes a wife, moulder it away!

> Nothing can again restore the hour
> Of glory in one's *glass* and splendour in one's flower!

Now, by a sort of sympathy, Clavering had a great respect for persons who dressed well, and a great desire for their good opinion. You could see these sentiments in his walk, that ineffable walk young Englishmen who are half proud, half ashamed of themselves, always assume.

Of course, White's Club was a place of very great consequence in his eyes. His name had just been put down, and he hoped in the course of a reasonable time to be comfortably planted in that human tulip-bed. His eyes were fixed upon the window of the said club, and had already recognised the neckcloths of one or two of his friends, when Greville, rousing him from the reverie into which so interesting a sight had plunged him, said carelessly, 'Are you not very tired, Sir James?'

'Why, I am rather,' answered Clavering, imagining that Greville might wish to rest in one of the clubs in the street, possibly in the very house of the British Albigeois, i.e. the gentlemen of White's.

'So am I,' returned Greville, 'and nothing can be luckier, here is a fareless coach. Certainly there is a goddess, a Trivia, that watches over wearied travellers!'

So saying, to the inconceivable dismay, astonishment, horror, and maddening agony of Sir James Clavering, Mr. Greville arrested a hackney-coach that was lazily lumbering up the hill of St. James's Street; ordered it to the pavement; and, in the full view of the window of White's, in the full view of the owners of the well-remembered neckcloths Sir James Clavering had noted, in the full view too of the large eyes of Captain Desborough—eyes which looked at that exact moment larger than ever—Greville,

drawing himself gracefully aside, gave the *pas* of the hackney-coach step to his new acquaintance.

One wild, hurried, despairing look around did Sir James Milner Clavering cast; and then, darting into the coach, he sank into a corner and could have wished to have sunken into the earth. 'Had it been at night, or even at twilight,' he murmured inly, 'I would not have cared a straw; but at noon, in the full press of St. James's Street, exactly opposite White's! Oh, I shall die.' [1]

Very leisurely did Greville enter the coach, and very leisurely did the coachman remount his box.

Time is measured by feeling. O'er Clavering's

soul
Winters of memory seemed to roll.

There never was a better tempered person than Clavering; and besides, he had a great, though unconfessed, reverence for Mr. Greville; nevertheless it was in a peevish and fretful voice that he said—

'Pah, how this d—d thing smells! and where the deuce do you intend it to take us?'

'To Lady Agnes Percivale's,' answered Greville.

'To Lady Agnes Percivale's? In a hackney-coach—at this hour too!' gasped Sir James Clavering.

'Ah, my dear fellow, if you think it a bad time to call, we can take a drive up and down Bond Street first. Shall I tell the coachman so?'

'My God, no! Let us drive on as fast as possible.'

'Right, we may go to Bond Street afterwards; I agree with you that it would be better to go first to Lady Agnes.'

Clavering made no reply. There was a rising at his throat, which took away his breath.

[1 To the descendants of Sir James Clavering, who now drive about London *sans gêne* in hansom cabs, the mental anguish here attributed to their progenitor must seem like the exaggeration of a libellous satire on that right-minded man. But the sensations inflicted on him by the artful Greville would seem to have been felt no less strongly, in similar circumstances, by his illustrious contemporary, Sydney Smith, who says of himself, 'I well remember, when Mrs. Sydney and I were young, in London, with no other equipage than my umbrella, when we went out to dinner in a hackney-coach (a vehicle, by-the-bye, now become almost matter of history), when the rattling step was let down, and the proud, powdered red plushes grinned, and her gown was fringed with straw, how the iron entered into my soul.'—*Life and Correspondence of the Rev. Sydney Smith, by his daughter, Lady Holland*, chap. ix. p. 147.]

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Greville saw, and compassionated, the misery he had occasioned to the ingenuous young man. His heart melted, and he resolved to relieve it.

'One's own carriage,' said he, lifting up his legs and depositing them carefully on the opposite seat—'one's own carriage certainly is pleasanter than a hackney-coach; it is a thousand pities one cannot carry it in one's pocket, and so have it always at hand. But a hackney-coach is better than walking when walking is fatigue.'

'Humph!' muttered Clavering.

'I have heard,' continued Greville—'I have heard the Duchess of —— say that she remembered, just before the Peace, that it was thought utterly unpardonable for any man who styled himself "armiger," and had the *entrée* of respectable houses, to go about in coaches of this popular description. The destruction of so ill-bred a notion, a notion that implies such doubt of oneself, and fear for other people, was, the Duchess informed me, happily effected among the male *gens du monde* by the foreign Princes in their visit to England. By the Emperor Alexander in especial. That personage not only made all convenient use of these stationary equipages himself, but was accustomed to take with him one or two of those English grands seigneurs whom we now acknowledge to be the most thoroughly and truly fine gentlemen of the day.'

'Indeed!' said Sir James earnestly, and insensibly assuming a less shirking and latent position in the coach.

'Alexander possibly had Peter the Great in his mind,' continued Greville, 'but I will say one thing for his countrymen, that there is not in the discovered regions of the earth a person more thoroughly versed in the theories of real good breeding, and the refined subtlety of true *bon ton*, than a polished and travelled Russian. He is haughty, it is true, but he never shows it. No one more gracefully exhibits parade, no one more gracefully dispenses with it. Etiquette in all its grades he is certain to know, but it sits on him easier than a coat ever sits on an Englishman. He drops naturally into the customs of a country, but he never mimics its affectations. He is certain of being the *mode*, and certain of never "following the leaders of it." He is quite willing to pay respect to the rank of others, but he is always mindful of his own: not the "do you know whom I am, sir?" reminiscence of an Englishman, which arises from the irritating idea that you slight his claims, but the proper and dignified persuasion of self-consequence which

never offends others, solely because it never supposes an affront to itself. Then, if he is ignorant of books, which he generally is, how profoundly versed is he in men! With what a polish he conceals his ignorance of the first, and with what an ease he displays his knowledge of the latter. How scrupulously honourable, too, he is about money, a thing about which, I grieve and blush to say, an English gentleman is often villainously criminal. My Russian has only one fault, as a gentleman I mean (not as a man, for *there* he has several), viz. he is too miscellaneous and too public in his amours—*Voilà tout!*'

'It was a rare time for the old ladies when the Russian army were in Paris!' said Clavering.

'Wonderfully so. Half the feminine antiquities of the city used to be absent every evening, and the other half went to seek them—Heaven knows where! But here we are.'

The coach stopped at the house of Lord Godalming, the father of Lady Agnes Percivale. There, to Clavering's infinite delight, Greville

Dismissed the thing on its accursèd way.

Lord Godalming was a quiet, courteous, popular person who collected pictures, loved good living, read a few books, was a moderate Whig, a resigned widower, and an excellent, upright, honourable, melancholy man. In his house presided a lady distantly related to him, Mrs. Chichester. She was very useful as a chaperon *and friend* to Lady Agnes, who, Lady Bellenden excepted, was his only surviving daughter.

Lord Godalming was exceedingly fond of both his children, especially of his youngest, who was nearly twenty years younger than Lady Bellenden, and was at heart as proud as he ought to have been that his unmarried daughter was the beauty of town, and his married one the leader of *ton*.

When Greville and his new friend entered the drawing-room, they found three or four visitors had preceded them. Among them was the incomparable Mrs. Holroyd. She honoured Greville, for she was terribly afraid of him, with her most gracious smile. But her words she reserved for Sir James Clavering.

'How do you do?' she said, shaking the amiable youth by the hand, with all a nine-daughtered matron's cordiality. 'How do you do? Delighted to see you. Did you ride here on your beautiful charger?'

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'Hem—no,' answered Clavering, hastening to change the subject, 'but I suppose Miss Holroyd is riding, as usual; she threatens to be quite an Amazon.'

'Oh, yes, poor thing, she is very fond of riding. 'Tis a charming exercise. You prefer your cabriolet. By-the-by, I suppose you came in that, and I wish to show Lady Agnes your bay horse; it is such a beauty.'

'Ah, *my dear* Mrs. Holroyd,' said the merciless Greville, 'don't trouble yourself to go to the window. One must travel through pain to find pleasure, and we came to see *you* in a hackney-coach.'

'A hackney-coach!' said Mrs. Holroyd, turning to Sir James Clavering, whose pure and eloquent blood spoke in his cheek. 'No, really!'

'Really, my dear madam,' answered Greville, playing with his cane. 'Really, you have no conception what a charming erratic motion is that of a hackney-coach. 'Tis a favourite method of progression with Sir James Clavering.'

'Oh, indeed!' said Mrs. Holroyd. 'Well, there *is* something *very manly* in it.'

What there is manly in a hackney-coach, Heaven only knows. But to make oneself uncomfortable is to be manly in this country. I rather think, too, a little mixture of uncleanliness is thought essential to merit that epithet. I have heard many persons say it is effeminate to use the bath too often.

'Mr. Greville,' said Lady Milsom, 'always travels in a stage-coach, does he not?'

'Never, Lady Milsom, if I can help it, because I shouldn't wish voluntarily to expose myself to rude contact. 'Tis not the coach I object to, but the people in the coach.'

'Well,' said Lady Milsom, 'I envy men the power to travel about in those coaches. They must see so much of life.'

''Tis a very disagreeable sort of life, I assure you, Lady Milsom. I know nothing that would sooner make a man a misanthrope than travelling from London to the Land's End in a stage-coach. You have no idea of the mingled hatred and contempt you would feel for your fellow-travellers before you completed your journey.'

'What, are they rude?'

'Rude! Oh, your John Bull never pays money for anything without thinking he buys the right to affront all his neighbours. Rude! by the spirit of Howard they are positively inhuman. If a

woman were found dying by the roadside, I am fully convinced that it would not happen once in ten times that an inside passenger would surrender his seat to her. And whenever you do meet civility, it is, as a witty young friend of mine very justly observed, always in the shape of an old lady who offers you apples and mutton sandwiches.'

'Well,' said Lady Milsom, laughing, 'but the intention even in that civility is good.'

'Yes, but it is never offered to people who are ill-dressed. The old lady would never give her apples and sandwiches to a person who was starving.'

Here Lady Bellenden entered.

We must take an early opportunity of describing that lady more minutely than we have yet done. Whenever she entered the room all conversation sustained a sort of revulsion. She never failed to produce what is termed theatrically 'an effect.' She was beyond all comparison the most striking and brilliant person in London. She often wanted good taste, but she never failed to dazzle. And besides, she was a woman of genius, real impassioned, vivid genius. She received the salutations of the party as a homage, and seating herself at a little distance from the group, beckoned Greville to her.

'Come hither, Greville,' said she.

I have said Lady Bellenden wanted good taste, and she showed it by omitting the Mr. to Greville's name.

'Come hither,' said she languidly.

Greville obeyed.

Lady Bellenden spoke in a low tone, and the only person present within hearing of the conversation between herself and Greville was Lady Agnes.

'I have been reading,' said she, 'that most beautiful work of Madame de Stael on the "Influence of the Passions." Tell me what you think of it.'

'It is beautiful,' said Greville, 'and I never read that chapter on love in especial without being affected to a degree which no other writing of sentiment can excite within me. It spoke to my heart more than even the "Reveries" of Rousseau, or the fourth canto of "Childe Harold." I feel as if I could have loved that woman had she been twice as ugly as I hear she was.'

'No, you could not have loved her,' said Lady Bellenden. 'I knew her well. You could not have loved her. Her sentiment was

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deeply felt, it is true, but it was purely selfish. I repeat you could not have loved her. But oh! how vividly she has portrayed love—love, that mysterious, miserable, overwhelming passion! Hers is not the little paltry sentiment doled out in weights and scruples—an enclosure of tame thoughts in a pale of commonplaces—it is the real, ardent, all-engrossing love which pervades the whole system: never to be curbed, never to be rooted out, elevating the soul beyond human conception, or plunging it below human degradation. It is the very extravagance, nay, I may say the very profaneness, of her thoughts which render them so irresistible in their truth. "If," (you remember that singular and daring passage?) "if," she says, "there are in the universe two beings united by a perfect sentiment of love, and also by a bond of marriage, every day on their knees let them bless their Creator. Let them look down in pity on the universe and its greatness, let them view with astonishment, let them cherish with anxiety and with awe, a happiness which so many accidents must have conspired to bestow, a happiness which raises them to a height so immeasurably beyond the rest of mankind. Yes, let them view their lot with a certain trembling apprehension, perhaps, that their fate may not be too far superior to ours; they have already received all the happiness which *we* expect in another life. *Perhaps for them there is no immortality!*"'

Low was the tone with which these words were uttered. But it trembled with deep and passionate agitation. Greville did not answer. His brow was dark and clouded. He raised his eyes, they encountered those of Agnes Percivale, which were bent timidly upon him. The colour rushed violently to her cheek as she met his eyes and withdrew her own. Lady Bellenden saw the blush, and her own cheeks grew as white as death. There was a short but embarrassed pause, and Greville was the first to break it.

'Yet,' said he, 'if you were to search all the works of Madame de Stael for a sentence you wished persons to ridicule, you could scarcely select one more likely to be laughed at by dull persons affecting to be lively, than that which you have just repeated.'

'Yes,' said Lady Bellenden, putting out her beautiful lip, 'but there is not a surer sign of a fool than to make a butt of romance.'

'True,' answered Greville, 'there are plenty of little wits who, like their namesake in Bartholomew Fair, think themselves wonder-

fully clever if they can make "Leander a dyer's son about Puddle Wharf, and Hero a wench of the Bankside!"'

'This from you,' said Lady Bellenden sarcastically, 'you who seem always to despise sentiment!'

'Sentiment, dear Lady Bellenden, but not passion. Passion is much too serious a thing for disdain!'

'But if you saw it in a woman, you would despise her for it. Oh men, men, you are terrible monopolisers!'

CHAPTER XII.

(Supplementary.)

GREVILLE CONTINUED. 1829. ÆT. 26.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

BOOK VIII.

1830-32

WHAT singular and contradictory combinations make the stratum of each individual mind!

Lady Bellenden was a woman whose passions seemed to despise the world, and whose actions were those of one who adored it. No one was more capable of that rare, noble, devoted love which we dream of between the age of sixteen and twenty-one. To her lover she would have sacrificed the world and herself. And yet in all other emotions she was one of the most worldly and the most selfish of human beings.

She was wedded to pomp and glitter, and yet she despised the persons for whom the pomp and the glitter were intended. By a confusion of mind she loved parade in the abstract, without being gratified by the effect it produced. If she had been cast in a desert island, she would have sought the mirror of a smooth stream to behold herself. She would have tamed all the peacocks in the island, and taught them to walk before her with their tails spread. She could not be termed a vain woman, and yet I know of no other epithet wherewith to express her character. Everyone applied that epithet to her, and she certainly lived and moved as if no other being deserved it half so well. She was haughty, violent, exacting. She would, I repeat, have sacrificed everything for her lover, but she would have teased him to death and then poisoned herself on his grave.

All was unquiet and brilliant in her mind, half diamonds, half tinsel. Her thoughts were always acting a sort of melodrama. She was internally and essentially theatrical. Yet throughout all the artificial and showy properties of her temperament there ran a vein

of the softest tenderness; the least thing, a letter written in child-hand, a strain of music, a kind word, a kind look, dissolved her into tears. Poetry and music seemed to make a part of her nature, so powerfully did she feel them, so utterly did they subdue her. Her imagination was her tyrant, it reigned over every part of her system.

Perhaps in that source was the mystery of her character to be traced. It was her imagination, not vanity, that made her so addicted to show. She loved to surround herself with all things that the world covets. Not because they were the insignia of station and of wealth, but because they were faint mimicries of the gorgeous ideas in her own fancy. Hence, the eccentricity as well as the splendour of her tastes.

Her house was more like the poet's dream of an Eastern palace than the mansion of an English noble. Her dress partook of the same *ideality*. Her very carriages were different from other persons'. Thus poorer and less imaginative leaders of the *monde* always sneered at Lady Bellenden's taste, while they confessed her magnificence. Even her walk was that which you might fancy a Corinna or a Calypso would have assumed—regal, but the regality more of a goddess or a crowned poetess, than of an earthly queen. She was systematically lavish and profuse; a Republic, says Franklin, may be maintained out of the waste of a Monarchy. You might have made the glory of a dozen Peerages out of the waste of Lady Bellenden's wardrobe and *bijouterie*.

The same show, luxury, and pomp pervaded her intellectual acquirements. She was superficially, but brilliantly, informed. She was eloquent, and if she pleased it, she might have been witty. But she thought wit beneath her.

How came she to love Greville, so little like her? She never would have loved him for himself. It was the meretricious and unreal part of him that attracted her imagination. She loved him for his fame, the fear he was held in, the mystery of his early life, the daring with which he opposed himself to popular opinion, the singularity of his independence, his very *insouciance* to herself whom all others affected to worship. Besides this, his style of countenance, half classical, half romantic, won her admiration far more than features much handsomer, but more ordinarily handsome, would have done.

Her love, then, for Greville was seated in her imagination! Yes, and it was *therefore* that it was immoveable and ineradicable. Her heart was a very shallow and light soil. The least

BOOK VIII.

1830–32

seed thrown there sprung up, it is true, but it withered the next morning. But her imagination was a rock: an old cedar-stump once rooted there would stand for ever, and defy wind and storm. In short, imagination was, with her, what very ardent, deep, and powerful feeling is in others.[1]

'Your Ladyship never looked so beautiful,' said Lady Bellenden's woman, as her mistress stood opposite to her Psyche, radiant with gems, and glowing in all the voluptuous richness of her stately and matured beauty.

'Does this hat really become me, then?' said Lady Bellenden more warmly than she usually spoke on such matters.

'Oh, wonderfully, my lady, wonderfully!' answered the abigail, and Lady Bellenden once more surveyed with haughty complacency the mirror which never, in truth, had reflected a more glorious image.

'Can the cold grace,' thought she as she gazed, 'and the childish features of Agnes really have for Greville a charm superior to that which I can command? No, impossible. But I have as yet tried upon him no spell but that of general effect. To-night let me try the witchery of individual flattery.'

Possessed with this thought, Lady Bellenden descended to the reception-rooms. And there—in this world Romance and Commonplace are ever jarring one against another—she perceived seated alone in a semi-slumber the person of his Lordship.

It has been said that marriages are made in heaven. Very possibly, but heaven exports the raw materials from earth. The workmanship may be admirable, but the stuff might be better.

'Well, my dear Lord, this is kind. I almost feared you would not give up your clubs to me, even for one night.'

'Ah—hem—ah, Lady Bellenden is it?' said his Lordship, yawning; 'cursed late these people make it, don't they? No, Julia, I thought it would be but a proper compliment to you to attend your *soirée*. I think in this country—hem, ha—the domestic virtues are not so much cultivated as they used to be, and really, "decencies are moralities," as that great man, who was it? said —hem, ha! We, dear Lady Bellenden, will set a better example.'

'You are right, Bellenden,' said the beauty, seating herself gracefully—Lady Bellenden would never have been seen out of an

[1] I have reason to believe that the character here ascribed to Lady Bellenden was compounded from qualities observed by the author in two actual persons. But in some few of its features it bears a resemblance, not unpleasant, to his autobiographical portrait of Lady Caroline Lamb.

attitude even by a grey cat—'and then who should adhere to ceremonies if we do not? Nothing is worse taste than that affectation of over ease and want of etiquette now growing so common. You recollect, my dear Lord, the anecdote in the life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury?'

'Ahem, no, my dear Julia, what was it? Great man, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, very great man. Don't you think that picture of *me* hangs too much in the shade?'

'We will change it to-morrow, Bellenden. Why, the anecdote is this. An ambassador to Philip the Second of Spain neglected some business of great importance in Italy because he could not agree with the French ambassador about some trifling punctilio. "How?" said the King to him, "have you left a business of importance for a ceremony?" "A ceremony," retorted the ambassador, "what is your Majesty's self but a ceremony?"'

'Very good, very good indeed. You have an excellent memory. "What is your Majesty's self but a ceremony?" an excellent answer, faith, and full of morality! But—thank Heaven there is the first knock! I wonder who it is. I hope G. A. will come soon. Must get up a rubber. D—d bad player, that fellow, Wilson. Can't see what people see in him. Ah, Agnes, how do you do?' as his Lordship's sister-in-law entered with Lord Godalming. 'Upon my honour you look superb. And Lord Godalming, my good friend, rejoiced to see you so well. Quite rid of the gout, eh? Will you make up a rubber?'

'With pleasure; who are to be the others?' said Lord Godalming. And the two noblemen paired off to another corner of the room, amicably conversing about odd tricks.

Meanwhile, as Lady Agnes seated herself on the ottoman, Lady Bellenden said, 'And how has my pretty Agnes past the day? Tell me, as a secret of the toilette; for your occupation, whatever it be, has made you handsomer than ever!'

'Ah, Julia,' said Lady Agnes, laughing, 'when will you leave off flattery, or why were you not born a man, and a candidate at a contested election? What hearts would you not win, and what fascinations likely to win them would you spare?'

'I, Agnes, oh imagine *me* at an election—I who care less for golden opinions than any other person in London! You laugh, nay is it not true?'

'Why this party then?' said Agnes, 'which I know you will say to-morrow tired you to death? Why is your house the handsomest and the most crowded house in town?'

BOOK VIII.

1830-32

'Simply because light, show, crowds, and talk give me a sort of intoxication. It is not pretty, you know, as poor Lady L—— used to say, with her graceful manner and coarseness of phrase, for us women to drink: and we are not happy enough to be always content with sobriety.'

As she spoke Lady Bellenden sighed.

'Yet,' said Lady Agnes, 'you who affect the *précieuse*, and know what wise men of old said, tell me if we are not afraid that we never shall be happy if we exceed that sobriety, as you call it. The sages tell us to keep the mind calm, and you would always be putting it into a fever.'

'But the sages were mistaken, my pretty preacher. Or they never lived in London and found that calm was the parent of *ennui*. One may easily keep the mind in *too* exact a method. You remember that the gentleman in the "Spectator" who lived according to his mathematical chair was forced to confess himself "in a sick and languishing condition."'

Here Lady Bellenden was interrupted by the arrival of some of her friends.

These friends were followed by more, the party thickened, the rooms grew warmer, and in a short time motion and comfort became alike impossible, and everyone was convinced that it was the most delightful party of the season.

'How I love these *réunions choisies*, so peculiar to us,' said Greville to Lady Milsom, as they stood together by one of the doors. 'How different from the heartless frivolity, the insipid dissipation, of France!'

'And pray, most patriotic of idlers, what brings you hither?'

'Lady Milsom,' answered Greville, 'I blush my gratitude, and appreciate the value of the sacrifice, but I must confess I am not——'

'Vain enough to monopolise all the attraction. May not Lady Bellenden share it with me? See, she comes to assert her claim!'

'My dear Lady Milsom,' said Lady Bellenden, gliding through the throng which allowed her to divide its ranks and then closed again, 'firm as the Phrygian phalanx'—'My dear Lady Milsom,' said Lady Bellenden, with that magic tone, and wooing smile, and overflowing tenderness of endearment, which it must be allowed are peculiar to 'good society,' and which make indifference look so exceedingly like imperishable friendship—'How glad I am to see you! But no chair? Heavens! how tired you must be; come into

the next room. Mr. Greville, escort us! We will find seats and form a coterie.'

So saying Lady Bellenden moved onward.

Where is the Phrygian phalanx gone?

The press again divided, and the two ladies and their escort arrived safely in another apartment.

CHAPTER XIII.

(Supplementary.)

'GREVILLE' BROKEN OFF. 1829. ÆT. 26.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

BOOK VIII. 1830–32

HERE Lady Bellenden, touching a spring concealed in the hangings of the wall, opened the entrance to a very small room fitted up in an Egyptian fashion.

Such surprises were characteristic of the owner of the house, and Lady Milsom's lip quivered with a sneer, intended only for Greville, as she declared her delight at Lady Bellenden's beautiful taste.

[It appears to have been the author's intention to describe in this place the commencement of a conversation between Greville and the two ladies. For, after the paragraph printed above, he inserted in brackets, and as it would seem by way of a memorandum to himself, the words '(Conversation on the war)': and what follows suggests the impression that it must be a development of some theme started by Greville before the unwritten conversation was interrupted by the entrance of other guests.

It was my father's frequent practice to reserve such details for completion until after he had more or less worked up the main points in his story.]

It was not to be expected that this retreat would be left perfectly unmolested by every individual among the hundreds who were expiring with heat and weariness.

Accordingly, Lady Bellenden and her two associates were soon joined by three or four of the most favoured guests of the hostess.

Among these was Mr. Verulam, a gentleman well known for eccentricity and a certain rude acuteness of observation which was particularly agreeable to his friends. He was a short, stout person, with a keen grey eye, a rosy cheek, a mouth curved upwards, and a chin not condemned to single blessedness, but 'carrying double,' like a farmer's pillion. He was rich, well-born, and an excellent man of business. He was a radical in politics, and was familiar with all classes. He was generally esteemed good-natured, clever, 'refreshing,' unrefined; and Lady Bellenden above all other persons valued him, because he was different from the incorporated insipidities whom she was in the habit of meeting.

'You are just in time to confute Mr. Greville,' said Lady Bellenden when Verulam appeared; 'he declares that we are disimproving daily, and you hold, you know, quite a different opinion.'

'Pardon me,' said Greville gaily, 'I don't say that the many (I use the old cant antithesis) are deteriorating; I hold, on the contrary, that men are improving, and gentlemen disimproving—a sign of the times which Mr. Verulam will possibly hail with rapture!'

'Not true, Greville, not true,' said Mr. Verulam emphatically, and shaking his head with a solemn air. 'Gentlemen and ladies too, ay, and English gentlemen and ladies into the bargain, are a million times better than they were fifteen years ago—before the peace for instance. Ah, Mr. Greville, you are young, you are young, but could you have seen the things I saw during the late war.'

'Why, what did you see?'

[Here the manuscript of 'Greville' comes to an untimely end. But proof exists that the conception of the tale had been fully elaborated in the mind of its author before he flung it aside.

Not only the main incidents and characters had been planned, down to the last scene of the *dénouement*, but even the distribution of the scenes, and the proportions to be observed in the conduct of the narrative, were all arranged and noted.

A synopsis of them, which I subjoin, was faintly pencilled on the torn cover of the finished chapters. The pencil marks are almost effaced, and it is with difficulty that I have deciphered

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them. But they are not without interest as illustrations of my father's habitual method of composition. They show the importance he attached to dramatic proportion in the management of his plots, and the precision with which he fixed their successive stages in his mind before attempting to transfer them to paper.

As regards the plot of 'Greville' itself, these pencilled memoranda indicate the intended development of an interest deeper and more human than any which could be elicited from a mere succession of pictures of society in its most superficial aspects: and they explain the pains bestowed on the sketching in of Lady Bellenden's character, by revealing the tragic importance of the part she was designed to play in the progress of the drama.

The 'Boy,' the 'Showman,' and the 'Woman,' mentioned in the Synopsis, are characters which do not appear in the opening scenes; and I must leave to the reader's imagination, or his curiosity, their unelucidated relations to the other *dramatis personæ*.]

Book Second, p. 140 (*effaced*).

Introductory Chapter. Call this book a Satire on Fine Life.

With Greville—(*effaced*).

(*Torn*). With Greville into low scenes. Interview with the Boy. Greville engages him.

(*Torn*). Breakfast. Satire on that amusement. Scene with Lady Bellenden.

(*Torn*). 20. Lady Agnes for the first time thinks Greville attached to her. Lady Bellenden sees her that evening. Impressive scene with her.

Chapter 3. Opera.

,, 4. Captain Desborough's house.

,, 5. Greville's second interview with the Boy.

,, 6. Engages Lady Bellenden, etc., to his dinner. Conversation on fashionable novels. Lord Besburgh best bred man in England.

CHAP. XIII. / ÆT. 26

Chapter 7. Lady Bellenden.
,, 8. Greville's Supper. Very witty and brilliant. Lady Agnes. Lord Bellenden present. Reappearance of the Boy. Lady Bellenden's swoon.

VOLUME II.

Introductory Chapter.
Chapter 1. Return to the Boy and Showman.
p. 60 {2 3} Low Life.
,, 4. Scene returns to Lady Bellenden. Morning. Her chocolate. Opium. Meditations.
,, 5.
,, 6.
,, 7.
,, 8.
,, 9.
Pp. 20. 10.

Book III.

Chapter 1. Greville goes to his country seat, description thereof.
,, 2. Lady Agnes. Mysterious appearance of Woman.
,, 3. Fête at Greville's. His civility to Mrs. Holroyd, etc. His love to Agnes. More felt than ever. Scene in the grounds. Mysteriously broken off.
,, 4. Agnes conversing with Lady Bellenden. They see the Woman. Lady Bellenden's fright.
,, 5. The warning to Agnes. Her terror. Greville finds her. The misunderstanding.
,, 6. Greville's pique. Resolution to go abroad. Lady Bellenden's advances to him. Her despair.

VOLUME III.

Continuation of Book IV.

Chapter 1. Scene goes back to Greville's escape, etc.
,, —. Recovery of the Child.

Book V.

Chapter 1. Greville breaks it to Lady Bellenden. Parents, etc. Lady B.'s feelings. Concealment of them.

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1830–32

Chapter 2 } The Woman comes to him, and tells him of the arts
,, 3 } she employed about Agnes and the reason. She will leave England for ever, now that her son is reinstated.

,, 4. Greville and Agnes.

,, 5. Lady B.'s visit to Greville.

,, 6. Lady Bellenden's reflections, etc. Her visit to Agnes, who is fast asleep with Greville's portrait on her bosom.

,, 7. Lady Bellenden's death.

,, 8. and last. Greville's marriage, etc.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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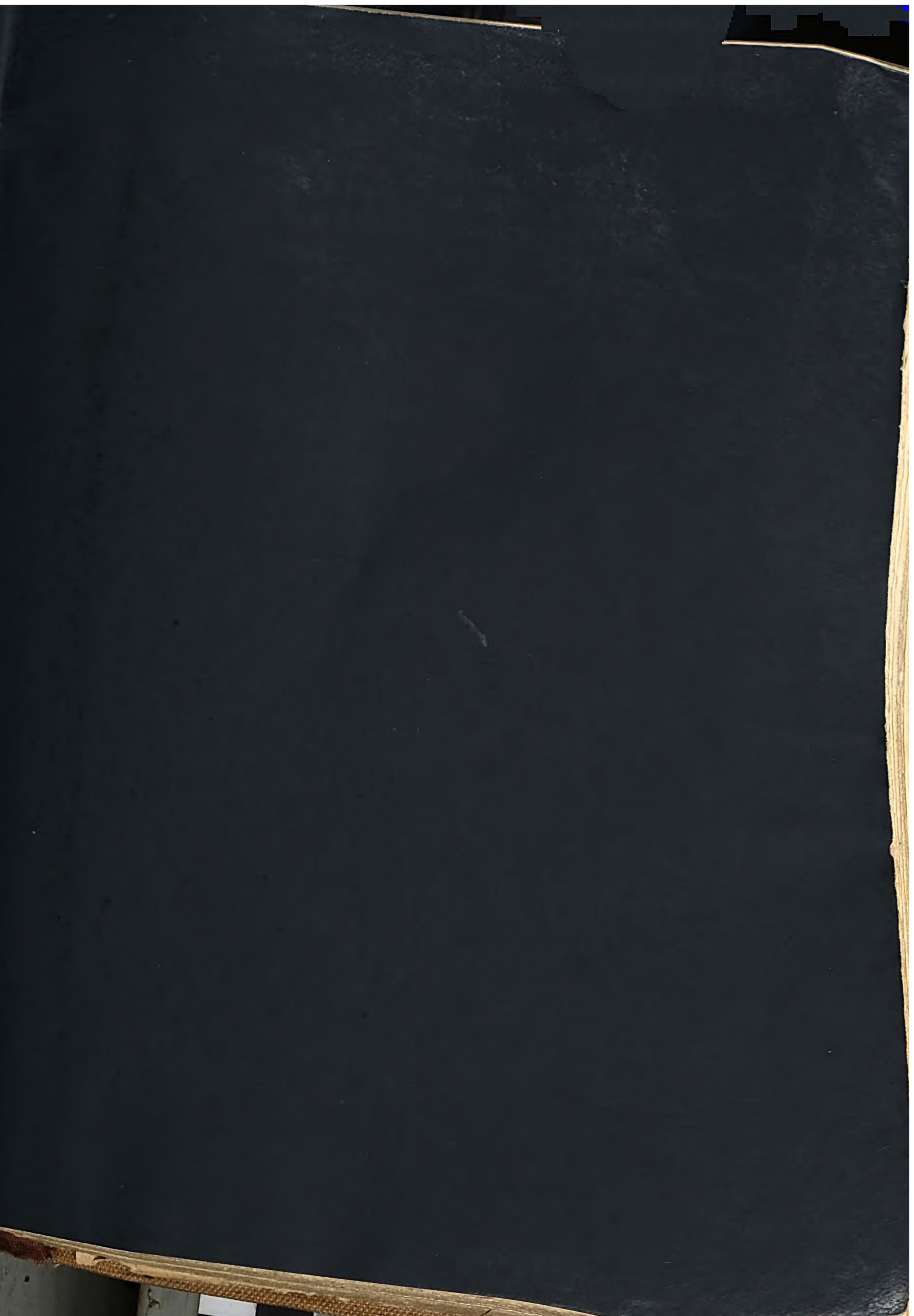

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